From Caregiver to Personal Support Worker: Canada's Caregiver Programs and Labour Market Segmentation Among Filipina Women in Toronto

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Abstract

The lowest rung of the Canadian healthcare system is occupied by those categorized as personal support workers (PSWs). Despite their important contributions to Canada's healthcare system, this work is stigmatized, devalued and characterized by multiple dimensions of precarity. It is also a labour segment that is increasingly differentiated by gender, race, and citizenship, with Filipina immigrants accounting for 30% of immigrants in this workforce. Recent scholarship has drawn connections between Canada's Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) and the overrepresentation of Filipina immigrants in PSW roles. While these studies demonstrate how most caregiver migrants eventually transition out of caregiving, many remain in a narrow set of low-wage, "low-skilled" occupations, with PSW work emerging as a notable choice. By centering the experiences of Filipina PSWs in Toronto who migrated to Canada as live-in caregivers, this thesis explores how the caregiver-to-PSW pathway is constituted in the local labour market and within the lifeworlds of Filipina former caregivers. Using a feminist economic geography framework, this research calls attention to: 1) the social and institutional mechanisms that construct a pathway towards PSW labour; and 2) the racialized and gendered discourses that construct idealized PSW subjectivities and the ways in which they overlap with notions of Filipina identity. Key theoretical concepts include the social embeddedness of labour markets, embodiment and interpellation, and citizenship. I situate this research within the wider institutional landscape of Canada's temporary migrant caregiver programs and the gendered politics of transnational labour migration in the Philippines to illustrate the context in which Filipina women come to view PSW work as a viable and suitable post-caregiver program career.

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List of Acronyms

CC	Community College
CDS	Caribbean Domestic Scheme
CNO	College of Nurses of Ontario
FDM	Foreign Domestic Movement
HC	Home and Community
HCA	Health Care Aide
HCP	Home Childcare Pilot
HSCPOA	Health and Supportive Care Providers Oversight Authority
IRCC	Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada
LCP	Live-in Caregiver Program
LTC	Long Term Care
NIEAP	Non-Immigrant Employment Authorization Program
PCC	Private Career College
PR	Permanent Resident
PSW	Personal Support Worker

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1. Introduction: My mother's story

My interest in this research is rooted in my mother's experiences as a Filipina caregiver immigrant working as a personal support worker (PSW) in Toronto's long-term care (LTC) sector. My mom came to Canada when she was 30 years old under the auspices of Canada's Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) in 1993, where she was mandated to live in the home of her employer for 24-months prior to her eligibility for an open work permit (OWP) and eventually, permanent resident (PR) status. She came to know about the LCP through her sister who had arrived in Canada years earlier under the Foreign Domestic Movement (FDM) program. She left behind her long-time boyfriend and eventual husband – my dad – in the Philippines to migrate through the program, as they believed it would be their best chance to start a new life in Canada. Although her background was in science and teaching, she chose not to pursue these sectors after obtaining PR to prioritize caring for my twin sister and I, as we were born after she obtained the PR and married my dad. Instead, she focused on providing for our family by working as a nanny and house cleaner for an employer in Toronto's Guildwood neighbourhood, leveraging her Canadian work experience as a live-in caregiver. Despite the poor pay she received and the fact that this work was unrelated to her educational and professional background, it enabled her to supplement our household income while being as present as possible for my sister and I growing up.

With the financial costs of sending two kids to university on the horizon, my mom went back to school in 2011 to become a PSW – 18 years after arriving in Canada. This decision was shaped by several factors, including the fact that her sister and her friends – all of whom also migrated to Canada through a caregiver program – were already working as PSWs. Seeing her family and friends succeed in this line of work helped her feel empowered to go back to school, especially since their earnings seemed to meet their material needs. Furthermore, PSW training programs – particularly those offered at private career colleges (PCCs) – were less costly and less time-consuming than her other option of pursuing a career as a registered nurse (RN). The part-time structure of the program she attended therefore enabled her to continue working while completing her program, alleviating some of the financial burden. After completing the PSW program, she found part-time work at a LTC facility in the Guildwood neighbourhood – not too far from her nannying and cleaning employment. Even after my mom secured a full-time contract at the LTC facility seven years later,

she continued to work at her employer's house in the morning before walking to her shifts at the LTC facility to ensure that she could provide for our family.

This routine constituted her working life until the COVID-19 pandemic began in the spring of 2020, when her cleaning employer of almost twenty years let her go in fear that she would contract the virus at her LTC workplace and bring it into their home. The stress of losing a source of income was exacerbated by having to navigate the COVID-19 outbreak at her workplace, which was severely lacking both the necessary protective equipment for workers and adequate staffing levels to ensure residents were cared for. The LTC industry in Ontario was hit especially hard during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, with tragic stories about abysmal working *and* caring conditions, resulting in the deaths of 1,589 residents during the peak of the first wave of the pandemic from April to June 2020 (Stall et al., 2021). Infections and fatalities amongst health care workers in LTC homes – including PSWs – were also particularly high given the frontline nature of their work and the severe lack of supports in place to contain the virus.

The LTC corporation she worked for offered to quarantine workers in hotels for the duration of the outbreak to minimize the risk of spreading the virus if they were to become ill. My mom took this offer to protect our family and quarantined at a hotel from mid-April to early June 2020. This was an incredibly emotionally and mentally distressing experience for my family, but especially for my mother. Her experiences as a PSW during the first waves of the COVID-19 pandemic – and particularly during those two months of family separation – led me to reflect deeply about how she came to work in the PSW sector. I thought about how this was the longest period of time that my parents were separated since she left my dad behind in the Philippines in 1993. I felt increasingly frustrated that these were the realities shared by many migrant Filipina women like my mother (Matatag, 2021; Gallardo, 2021). Through these reflections, I realized that the channeling of Filipina immigrants into care worker occupations like PSW roles might be a collective story, linked to pathways of immigration. It is this process that forms the central focus of my thesis.

1.2. Research purpose

My research builds on existing scholarship about the labour market transitions and experiences of Filipina caregiver immigrants in Canada after completing a temporary foreign caregiver program (Tungohan et al., 2015; Banerjee et al., 2018; Hanley et al., 2017; Lightman et al., 2021; Torres et al., 2012; Pratt, 2012; Atanackovic and Bourgeault, 2014). Broadly, I am interested in understanding the circumstances that shape their decision-making processes and labour

market transitions upon completing a caregiver program. More specifically, I aim to understand the social, institutional, and discursive mechanisms that constitute a pathway towards PSW roles within the context of Filipina women's experiences of precarious non-citizenship status as caregiver migrants (Goldring and Landolt, 2011, 2013). As Kofman and Raghuram (2015) note, social reproduction is a key lens through which we can better link labour and family as fundamentally interconnected within "circuits of migration" (p. 42). This research will therefore also consider the ways in which caregivers' legal status and occupational transitions are embedded in their everyday social reproduction responsibilities.

Dyer et al.'s (2008) conceptualization of caring as an entanglement of emotional labour and body work provides a valuable framework for understanding the social, spatial, and temporal dimensions of PSW labour. Emotional labour involves the management of emotions to meet the expectations, needs, and desires of employers or clients (Hochschild, 2000), while body work is characterized by the "intimate, messy contact" between care workers and those they care for, with the body serving as the "immediate site of labour" (Wolkowitz, 2002, p. 497). This framework highlights how a worker's embodied attributes and workplace performances shape differential experiences and valuations of care, while also foregrounding the context in which their social reproductive labour is commodified (Twigg et al., 2011; Erickson and Grove, 2008; Dyer et al., 2008). This is especially pertinent in a context where the provision of care is neoliberalized and restructured while also relying on the poorly paid and socially devalued labour of the PSW workforce, who are overwhelming racialized migrant women (England, 2010; Turcottes and Savage, 2020).

In this context, my research is guided by two key questions:

1. What are the social networks, flows of information, familial obligations, and resources available that shape Filipina women's post-caregiver program labour market options in the context of their age and life stage? How are their range of employment options constricted or broadened?
2. What are the racialized and gendered discourses that become scripted onto constructions of PSW subjectivities, and how do such discourses converge with Filipina PSWs', PSW educators', and community insiders' varying understandings of Filipina identities and/or Filipino culture?

There are three key spatialities at work here. The first are the internal bordering spatialities of temporary foreign caregiver programs as emblematic of exclusionary citizenship regimes that

restrict rights and commodify inclusion into the nation state while rendering migrants' personhoods, their social relations, their labour power, and their mobilities as "unfree" (Bakan and Stasiulis, 1997, 2012; Stasiulis, 2020; Sharma, 2006). These "territorial regulatory regimes" (Kelly, 2010) are constituted by the contingency surrounding one's right to remain present in a nation state and the "uncertainty of access" to resources and public goods, what Goldring and Landolt (2013) conceptualize as the *conditionality* of legal status (p. 4). The inequalities produced by these internal bordering spatialities and systems of precarious legal status can be conceptualized as *differential inclusion*, referring to the "dynamic, hierarchical and relational classification and sorting of groups and individuals that produces gradations of inclusion, exclusion; precarity and vulnerability; inclusion without belonging" (Goldring and Landolt, 2022, p. 34). Institutionalized mechanisms of differential inclusion territorializes access to local labour markets, social services, political entitlements, and other social mobilities according to legal status (Lewis et al., 2015). In this view, migration to Canada through a temporary foreign caregiver program can be understood as a key moment of socio-spatial transformation in a migrant's experience in Canada, where their mobilities and rights are reconfigured in ways that shape their experiences of inclusion, exclusion, and belong across different facets of Canadian society.

The second set of spatialities are the ways in which home and family contexts, both local and transnational, contextualize the labour market decision-making processes caregivers engage in when undergoing legal status changes (Mitchell et al., 2004; Hanson and Pratt, 2003; Kofman and Raghuram, 2015). As feminist economic geographers argue, the diverse economic livelihoods that women participate in are embedded in the social reproduction of their families, their selves, and their communities (Oberhauser, 2018; Meehan and Strauss, 2015). Thus, women's decisions to engage in different labour market opportunities are connected to their settlement in Canada *and* their transnational responsibilities to family back home – such as remitting earnings to family members in the Philippines or reconfiguring their mothering and/or caregiving roles in the context of family separation (Kofman and Raghuram, 2015; Fudge, 2016; Kelly, 2010). In other words, the spatiality and temporality of their social relations across transnational and local contexts shape their migration trajectories and labour market participation strategies.

The third set of spatialities are the discursive geographies of caring labour and its racialized and feminized dimensions, which function in ways that circumscribe the subject positions available to Filipina migrant women in the labour market (Pratt, 1999; McDowell, 2015; McDowell et al., 2007). I draw from poststructuralist feminist geographers that emphasize the "reciprocal

constitution of subjectivity and geography", calling attention to the inherent materiality of discourse and the ways in which our understandings of social phenomena are discursively constructed (Hanson and Pratt, 2003, p. 160; Pratt, 1998). Feminist geographer Geraldine Pratt (1998) argues that discourse contains an inherent geography, as it emerges through "situated practices" within specific social, spatial, and temporal contexts. These discursive geographies – shaped by dominant stereotypes and representations about racialized care work and Filipina women – play an important role in structuring the material realities of Filipina migrant women in the labour market and beyond. In the context of my research, this perspective reveals how the discursive construction of idealized PSW subjectivities and notions of 'Filipina-ness' are embedded within material relations, ultimately shaping the opportunities and constraints they encounter in their work and their lives.

In addition to nuancing the post-regularization experiences of Filipina live-in caregiver migrants, this work contributes to scholarship about who PSWs are, their educational and on-the-job experiences, and the nature of their work within the context of the Toronto region. Much of the existing research about the PSW labour force is national or provincial in scope and exists within the fields of human resources management (Berta et al., 2013; Harun and Walton-Roberts, 2022) and public health (Pinto et al., 2022; Sethna, 2013; Kelly and Bourgeault, 2015; Saari et al., 2018; Lightman et al. 2022). This work has called attention to the challenges experienced by PSWs in various sectors, provincial differences and similarities, as well as the changing role of PSWs in an aging Canadian society shaped by neoliberal social policy. While this scholarship has also been fruitful in revealing the precarity of PSW work and the experiences of older racialized immigrant women in these occupations (Owusu, 2023; Chowdhury & Gutman, 2012; Lum et al., 2010; Laporte et al., 2020; Pinto et al., 2022; Syed, 2019; Kelly, 2017), further qualitative detail is needed to nuance and situate these trends within the broader socio-spatial and historical context of an international division of reproductive labour (Kofman and Raghuram, 2015; Eckenwiler, 2012; Browne and Braun, 2008; Browne and Misra, 2003). My project seeks to address this gap by providing 1) a smaller scale case study about the PSW labour market in the GTA region and 2) a qualitative focus on the idiosyncrasies of different PSWs' experiences.

1.3. Research context

1.3.1. PSW labour markets

Personal support workers (PSWs) are frontline workers that comprise 15.9%[1] of the health care and social assistance workforce in Ontario (Canada Job Bank, 2025). PSWs are employed across a range of healthcare settings and may fall under different names, including nurse aides, health care aides, or care attendants (Zagrodney, 2022; Laporte et al., 2020). As direct care workers, they work alongside other health care providers to perform essential care and support to those requiring assistance with activities of daily living due to age, illness, medical conditions, or disabilities. They are employed in a wide range of workplace environments and sectors, including institutional settings like hospitals and long-term care facilities, or home-based and community care settings. As a form of *body work*, PSWs attend to immediate basic health needs "directly on the bodies of others, who thereby become the object of the worker's labour" (Twigg et al., 2011, p. 173). This includes but is not limited to bathing, feeding, mobility assistance, toileting, and dressing. In addition to this physical labour, PSWs engage in various degrees of intimate and emotional labour, managing the emotional demands of caregiving while providing companionship and support to their clients in often challenging contexts (Dyer et al., 2008, p. 2034; Twigg et al., 2011; McDowell, 2009).

Despite the role they play in providing care to a diverse range of populations, including the elderly and those with disabilities, this work is characterized by multiple dimensions of employment precarity (Vosko, 2006; Daly & Armstrong, 2016), including chronically low hourly wages, a lack of full-time and permanent positions, uneven access to healthcare benefits, and increasingly challenging working conditions (Saks and Zagrodney, 2020; Pinto et al., 2022; Owusu, 2023). These circumstances of precarious employment are compounded by the fact that immigrants comprise 36% of the national PSW workforce, with 85.5% of the workforce comprised of immigrant women (Turcotte and Savage, 2020). Patterns of segmentation are particularly acute in large Canadian cities. In Toronto, for instance, the PSW labour force is comprised of 78.7% immigrants – the majority of whom are older racialized women (Turcotte and Savage, 2020).

[1] The healthcare and social assistance sector includes "establishments that provide health care by diagnosis and treatment; residential care for medical and social reasons; and social assistance such as counselling, food services, and childcare." (Job Bank of Canada, 2025). This includes PSWs employed in nursing and residential care facilities.

Demographically, Black and Filipino immigrants each account for 30% of the immigrant workers in the PSW sector (Turcotte and Savage, 2020).

1.3.2. Post-caregiver program labour market transitions

In the case of Filipina workers, recent studies suggest that migration to Canada through a temporary foreign caregiver program, such as the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP), is a key mechanism that contributes to their segmentation in caregiving roles like PSW employment (Tungohan et al., 2015; Banerjee et al., 2018, Lightman et al., 2021). Active from 1992-2014, the LCP was a temporary foreign worker program with a pathway to an open work permit and permanent settlement in Canada after 24 months of live-in care work within a four-year period. While the prospect of obtaining PR was a key factor in the LCP's appeal, LCP participants were subjected to significant restrictions on their mobilities and personal freedoms (Torres et al., 2012; Bakan and Stasiulis, 2012; Drolet, 2016). This included the mandatory requirement to live inside the home their employer for the duration of the program as well as limited access to services and resources as noncitizens. Furthermore, caregivers under the auspices of the LCP could not pursue education or training programs longer than 6-months nor could they pursue employment outside of their live-in caregiving position (Wadehra, 2021). One of the most significant factors shaping a caregiver's post-caregiver program transition, however, was the fact that they were disallowed from migrating to Canada with their family members, including their spouses and children (Pratt, 2012). The social, emotional, and financial challenges of long-term family separation meant that many caregivers understandably felt pressured to enter the open Canadian labour market as quickly as possible to begin saving for their settlement outside of their employer's household and to sponsor and reunite with their family members in Canada (Tungohan et al., 2015; Banerjee et al., 2018). Thus, the experience of migrating to Canada under these circumstances significantly impacted the transitions caregivers made even if they successfully obtained PR.

Existing research demonstrates that migration to Canada through a temporary foreign caregiver program is a mechanism of deskilling and labour market segmentation that constitutes "subtle processes of exclusion for Filipina women in the labor market" (Banerjee et al., 2018, p. 932; Tungohan, 2015; Lightman et al., 2021; Torres et al., 2012). While caregiver immigrants may have encountered the same challenges as other immigrants, their "unique path to immigration" as live-in caregivers created specific issues that shaped their transitions from temporary foreign caregiver to permanent resident (Tungohan et al., 2015, p. 89; Banerjee et al., 2017). Even though obtaining an open work permit and permanent resident status meant that caregivers were closer to

realizing family reunification, their economic insecurity was 'paradoxically magnified' because of new costs related to their transitions from temporary worker to permanent resident (Tungohan et al., 2015, p. 96). The emotional and financial toll of long-term family separation are also key factors that negatively impacted caregivers' labour market integration. The desire to reunite with family members in Canada while maintaining ongoing financial responsibilities often prompted caregivers to prioritize finding a 'survival job' over a career that aligned with their experiences of personal interests (Banerjee et al., 2018; Spitzer and Torres, 2008). Additionally, the isolation of being socially and spatially confined to their employer's home meant that caregiver immigrants' social networks were sometimes truncated to those who migrated to Canada through the same pathway, which sometimes limited information and advice about retraining and job searches outside of caregiving (Tungohan et al., 2015).

Even though most caregiver migrants were highly educated, their education and professional qualifications were often devalued or unrecognized in the open labour market (Kelly et al., 2011, Banerjee et al., 2018). Because LCP immigrants could not seek employment opportunities outside of live-in care work, their employment prospects were truncated as they entered the open labour market with domestic care work as their only Canadian experience (Atanackovic and Bourgeault, 2014; Tungohan et al., 2015). Pursuing upgrading courses or having regulated professional credentials assessed is a time-consuming and expensive process, and many immigrants chose to delay these processes to enter the open labour market as soon as possible (Banerjee et al., 2018). Furthermore, caregiver migrants could not access government-funded supports and public services, like publicly funded immigration and settlement services including employment counselling and English language classes, until they completed the program and obtain permanent resident status which further delayed their ability to find non-caregiving occupations (Atanackovic and Bourgeault, 2014; Banerjee et al., 2018). Even when they could legally access institutional supports, such as education assistance loans, these resources often channel migrants into high demand yet low-wage occupations, such as personal support work or early childhood education (Torres et al., 2012).

Thus far, scholarship on post-caregiver labour market transitions demonstrate how the institutional and social challenges of transitioning from one form of citizenship to another are compounded by race-based and gendered discrimination in the open labour market, which helps explain why Filipina former-caregivers become concentrated in niche occupational segments after receiving PR status (Lightman et al., 2021). Furthermore, literature on the characteristics of the

PSW labour market outlines the socio-economic challenges and inequities of the work, and how racialized immigrant women are disproportionately impacted by the systemic inequities of the PSW industry. While Tungohan et al. (2015) note that "very little is known about the types of jobs live-in caregivers hold after the LCP", their findings reveal an interesting increase in the number of LCP-caregivers becoming HCAs/PSWs over time. Here, the number of Filipina former live-in caregivers that transition into HCA/PSW occupations jumps from 2% to 18.6% over the course of 10 years or more in Canada, becoming the most prominent occupation category (Banerjee et al., 2018). However, very little qualitative detail is available about the actual processes through which former caregivers navigate the Canadian labour market and end up in PSW work. More research is needed to understand the assemblages of processes, actors, and sites that constitute a pathway towards PSW labour amongst Filipina caregiver migrants upon completing a caregiver program.

1.4. Methodology

I align my work with feminist methodologies which generate knowledge from the standpoints of women's "concrete experiences", foregrounding the complexities, subtle nuances, and diverse range of activities that encapsulate their everyday geographies and embodied experiences (Brooks, 2007, p. 56; McDowell, 1992). This approach is grounded in the understanding that knowledge is embodied, partial, and situated within the specific spatial and temporal contexts of women, challenging the positivist stance that 'good' research is objective and impartial (England, 2006; McDowell, 1992; Brooks, 2007). Feminist standpoint is an 'entry' into understanding the social world "that begins with, and is developed directly from, women's experiences" as a source of knowledge production (Brooks, 2007, p. 60). I integrate an intersectional lens to reject an essentialized, 'unifying' standpoint of women and instead recognize that the "uniqueness" of a woman's experience is where insight about the social world is generated (Brooks, 2007, p. 70).

My project will foreground the experiences of a small group of Filipina former live-in caregivers who are now PSWs to generate insight into the entanglements of precarious legal status, social reproduction, and labour market segmentation, as shaped by intersecting structures of social differentiation. Rather than producing a generalizable or exhaustive study of phenomena, feminist standpoint approaches see individual voices as meaningful in their own right, producing rich insight into broader social processes regardless of their "inappropriateness for extrapolation to generalizations or quantifiable trends" (England and Stiell, 1997, p. 204; Brooks,

2007; Hesse-Biber and Griffin, 2016; McDowell, 1999). On a macro level, the women's experiences are linked through the politics of global care chains (Fudge, 2016; Kofman and Raghuram, 2015; Herrera, 2013), the globalization of social reproductive labour (Romero et al., 2014; Zimmerman et al., 2006; Eckenwiler, 2012); and the power relations through which these processes are embedded in. The idiosyncrasies that characterize their unique experiences, however, point to new knowledge about the implications of these macro-level processes on the ground.

Feminist researchers emphasize self-reflexivity as an ongoing aspect of the research process, calling on researchers to engage critically with how their positionalities within sets of power relationships might shape their systems of knowledge production and understandings of social phenomena (Moss, 2005; McDowell, 1992). My personal connections to this topic have been central to my research from the beginning, as I was inspired by my mom's lived experiences as a Filipina live-in caregiver and later, a personal support worker, to explore this topic. I was cognizant of the ways in which this made me, in some ways, an insider to the research, while also recognizing that in many ways I am also an outsider (Dinçer, 2019). Throughout my interviews, I would sometimes point to how their stories shared similarities to my own experiences, my mother's experiences, and the experiences of other women I spoke with. My intention here was not to overstate our shared identities as Filipina women "in a way that was unnatural" (Kohl and McCutcheon, 2015, p. 755); rather, I hoped to point to the ways in which their individual stories were also part of a larger collective story amongst Filipina migrant women in Canada (Francsico-Menchavez, 2022). Here, I was inspired by Francisco-Menchavez's (2022) articulation of *kuwentuhan* as method, which refers to the Filipino cultural practice of *kwentuhan* – or "talk story" – as a way of elucidating a collective experience through an individual's own narrative imbued with political potential. While I did not incorporate *kwentuhan* (Francisco-Mechavez, 2022) as a research method, per se, I saw it as an interviewing sensibility that could destabilize the researcher-researched dynamic and instead foster a sense of rapport and solidarity through reciprocal knowledge sharing in a cultural way.

1.4.1. Motivation and positionality

As noted earlier, I approach this research as a second-generation Filipina-Canadian and as the daughter of a former live-in caregiver whose settlement in Canada shaped her trajectory towards PSW work. This positionality is central to my understanding of the phenomena in which I am studying. My mother began her career as a PSW in 2011, nearly two decades after migrating to Canada as a live-in caregiver in 1993. Her experiences of economic precarity and exclusion from

the labour market as a live-in caregiver meant that by the time she sponsored my father to come to Canada and entered the open labour market, her priorities were reoriented around making a day-to-day living rather than pursuing her occupational and educational goals. These responsibilities were compounded when my sister and I were born, as the demands of providing for a growing family left little room for her to envision or pursue opportunities beyond care work. My mother's trajectory towards PSW work is emblematic of how exclusionary migration regimes and labour market practices systematically push migrant women into precarious, low-wage care work. Her experiences of resilience, sacrifice, and care for our family underpins my motivation for this work – especially since her story is shared by those with similar pathways to Canada. My goal is not to romanticize these struggles, but rather, locate these experiences of precarity and constrained mobility (Lewis et al., 2015; Polanco, 2019; Parreñas, 2011) within wider labour regimes that commodifies inclusion into the nation state and devalues the social reproductive labour performed by racialized migrant women.

1.5. Research design

For this research, I conducted 16 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with three key stakeholder groups: Filipina PSWs who migrated to Canada through a caregiver program; PSW educators; and community workers and advocates with experience supporting Filipina caregiver immigrants in Canada. I created separate interview guides (Appendix A) tailored to each group to capture their situated standpoints and generate insight into topics related to labour market outcomes, migration, and embodiment. I conducted interviews from early July to mid-September 2023. I offered all participants the choice of being interviewed over the telephone or in person at a location of their choice. In total, 9/16 interviews were held in person and 7/16 over the phone. 15/16 interviews were conducted in English, and one was conducted in Tagalog at the participant's request. Each participant was given a pseudonym for the purpose of maintaining confidentiality in this research (Figure 1). While I estimated interviews to be between 30-60 minutes, most were between 60-90 minutes. All participants consented to having our conversations audio-recorded and transcribed. I manually transcribed each interview and qualitatively coded each interview using *Dedoose* data analysis software. I conducted a thematic analysis inductively, allowing key themes to emerge naturally from the interviews themselves (Figure 2).

Participant ID	Participant Name	Age	Year of Arrival and Caregiver Program	Years as a PSW	Current Place of Employment
PSW-1	Angelica	65	1986, Foreign Domestic Movement	23	LTC Facility
PSW-2	Maris	60	1992, Live-in Caregiver Program	11	LTC Facility
PSW-3	Angela	56	2009, Live-in Caregiver Program	<1	LTC Facility (Registered Nurse)
PSW-4	Lynn	63	1990, Foreign Domestic Movement	18(?)	Home and Community
PSW-5	Goldie	42	2005, Live-in Caregiver Program	5	LTC Facility
PSW-6	Claire	32	2019, Home and Childcare Pilot Program	Certification in Progress	Hotel
PSW-7	Gillian	44	2009, Live-in Caregiver Program	3	Home and community, long-term care facility
PSW-8	Gabrielle	45	2013, Live-in Caregiver Program	1.5	Hospital
PSW-9	Chantel	45	2010, Live-in Caregiver program	1.5	Home and Community
PSW-10	Alice	50	2009, Live-in Caregiver Program	2	Long-term care home (Registered Practical Nurse)
School-1	Danica	n/a	n/a	n/a	Executive Director, Private Career College
School-2	Bonnie	n/a	n/a	n/a	Program Coordinator and Instructor, Community College
School-3	Sarah	n/a	n/a	n/a	Instructor, Community College
CI-1	Erika	n/a	Live-in Caregiver Program	n/a	Community organization, advocate
CI-2	Julia	n/a	Live-in Caregiver Program	n/a	Community organization, advocate
CI-3	Laura	n/a	Caregiver Program	n/a	Private immigration and employment consulting, community worker

Figure 1. A chart listing the details of my participants and their pseudonyms.

I selected the GTA as my study area mainly for practical reasons, since this is where I live and where my personal connections are located (Figure 3). However, the GTA labour market is particularly interesting to study given its significance as an arrival site for caregiver migrants and its high concentration of PSW training programs at both the community college level and in private career colleges. While the geography of the site is rather large, I recognize the diverse working and social reproductive lives that workers might have that may 'spill' over the official boundaries of the City of Toronto.

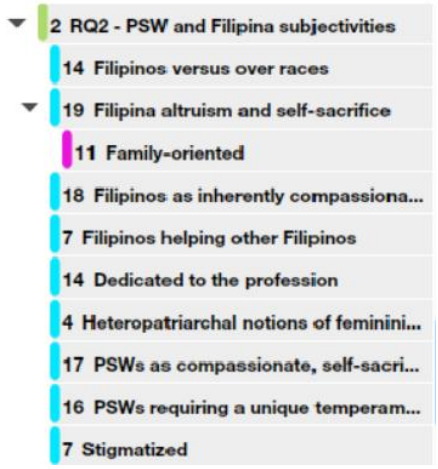


Figure 2. An example of a code tree from my inductive thematic analysis in Dedoose.

The first group of participants are Filipina PSWs (n = 10) who migrated to Canada through a caregiver program and are currently living and employed within the regional boundaries of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). I recruited participants using purposive sampling of my own personal social and kin networks, supplemented by posting advertisements on Toronto-based PSW groups on social media (i.e. Facebook). The ten women I spoke with arrived through various iterations of a caregiver program: seven came through the LCP, two came under its predecessor the Foreign Domestic Movement (FDM), and one came through the Caring for Children Pilot Pathway stream in 2019. Two of the women I spoke with, Angela and Alice, were able to exit the PSW sector and become registered practical nurses (RPNs), but they nevertheless wanted to participate to share their stories. The women were of diverse ages, marital statuses and family compositions and were in different stages of their PSW careers. As a gesture of appreciation for their time and to minimize the material burdens of participating in this research, I offered participants in this group a $40 cash honoraria.

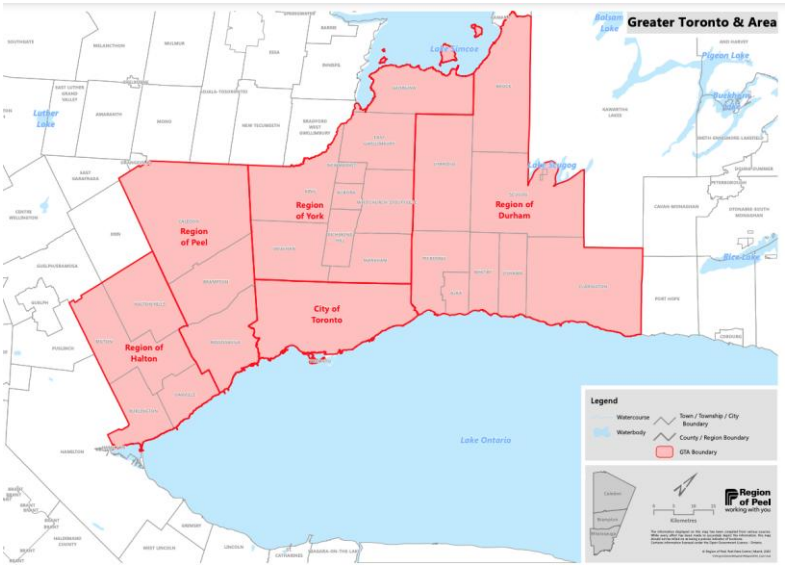


Figure 3. The Greater Toronto Area (Source: Region of Peel, Peel Data Centre, 2022).

I initially planned to limit the scope of my research to those who migrated to Canada under the LCP, given the high concentration of arrivals from the Philippines under this program. I chose to broaden the scope to include caregivers who migrated under other iterations of Canada's caregiver programs based on the recognition that the live-in caregiver-to-PSW pathway is not an outcome isolated to LCP migration. Although Canada's caregiver programs have evolved over time, the essence of differential and commodified inclusion into the Canadian labour market has remained and continues to structure migrants' labour market transitions. These programs have

incorporated caregiver migrants into the Canadian labour market in very particular ways along intersecting dimensions of race, gender, and precarious citizenship. Thus, a broad look at the experiences of caregiver migrants from a diversity of Canada's caregiver programs is a worthwhile endeavour for understanding how migrating under a caregiver program can lead to deskilling and labour market segmentation.

As mentioned, each interview guide was developed with the intention of understanding the women's situated standpoints. The questions I asked Filipina PSWS revolved around their families in Canada and the Philippines, their motivations for migrating as caregivers, previous occupations and education experiences in the Philippines, their work experiences in Canada, and their sense of self as Filipina women. I aimed to understand the factors that shaped their journey towards PSW labour within the context of their lives as Filipina migrant women. I recognized that experiences of migration, long-term family separation, sacrifice and resilience, and marginalization in the labour market are often sensitive and painful topics, and I was mindful of how discussing these topics with a stranger – regardless of our shared cultural standpoints – could feel daunting and extractive to the women I spoke with. I strived to be mindful of creating a comfortable space and emphasized to participants that they could refuse to answer any questions and revoke their consent to participate at any time. Although I used my interview guide to lead the conversation, I remained flexible and sensitive when asking questions about their experiences by letting the conversation flow based on what the interviewee wanted to discuss.

Secondly, I interviewed staff from PSW education programs (n = 3) to learn more about the education and training process in depth. More specifically, I sought to understand the institutional and discursive mechanisms that produce, educate, and train PSWs and to understand how these practices might contribute to the channeling of Filipina caregiver immigrants to the PSW sector. The interviews focused on the staff member's role within the program, each program's recruitment and marketing practices, education curricula, student demographics, and the participants' insights about the PSW workforce in the GTA. I also sought to explicate how PSW program staff, as institutional actors within the labour market system, made sense of racial and gendered patterns of labour market segmentation within the specific context of the GTA. I recruited participants using purposive sampling techniques led by an online search of the GTA's most popular PSW training institutions. I identified potential participants based on their job titles and positions within the training institution (i.e. Program Coordinator, Program Director).

These participants were contacted via email and telephone. I spoke with a Program Coordinator and a Teaching Instructor from two different community colleges (CC) in the GTA and the Executive Director from a private career college (PCC). All three educators were women. Talking to staff members in the PSW education landscape about the programs they work for is arguably considered an aspect of their jobs as representatives of education/training institutions. Furthermore, interviews were scheduled during their workday and not while they were 'off the clock'. For these reasons, I did not offer an honorarium for participating in my research. Given the differences between PCCs and CC, as discussed in Chapter 3, I hoped to speak with four education stakeholders in total – ideally, two from CCs and two from PCCs. However, I encountered issues of non-response to my cold calls and emails when recruiting potential participants.

The first education stakeholder was Danica, the executive director of a popular PSW PCC in Toronto. Danica is a Filipina woman born in Canada whose family has owned and operated the school since the 1980s. Her mother, who migrated to Canada in the 1970s as a nurse in the hospital sector, opened the school upon noticing a sector-wide demand for PSWs as well as an inconsistency in the education and training of immigrant PSWs in Canada. Notably, Danica also operates a PSW agency under the same name as the PCC, which I came to learn as our interview progressed. Her school offers full-time and part-time programs on a mostly remote-learning basis and is partnered with various facilities in the GTHA to provide students with in-person clinical placements. To graduate from the program, students must complete 13 course modules in accordance with the Personal Support Worker Standard established by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, with topics including safety and mobility, personal hygiene, end of life care, care planning, and more. Furthermore, they are required to complete a total of 300 hours of unpaid work in a clinical placement (200 hours) and community placement (100 hours). Students can request to be placed at specific facilities or sectors but are also assigned placements according to where they live. Since its establishment in the 1980s, this PCC has seen over 5000 students graduate.

The second education stakeholder was Bonnie, the program coordinator for a large CC in the GTA and a registered nurse (RN). While she did not discuss her migration pathway to Canada, she is a Filipina woman who obtained her nursing training in the Philippines. The program she works for offers full-time and part-time formats that can be completed on a hybrid, fully remote, or flexible schedule, with two in-person, unpaid practicum placements. Like the program offered by Danica's PSW PCC, students are assigned to placements based on where they live and must

complete two placements in clinical settings and community care. Placements are facilitated by a clinical placement liaison. Course topics are also aligned with the Personal Support Worker Standards set by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities and include palliative care, personal hygiene, mental health, and illness management.

The third education stakeholder was Sarah, a PSW instructor at another large CC in the GTA and a retired registered nurse (RN). Sarah is non-Filipina (White) woman and has been working as a PSW instructor for over 7 years. The program structure offers full-time and part-time formats that can be completed on a hybrid, fully remote and/or asynchronous learning options. Students are required to complete two unpaid placements; the first placement is two-days a week for 10 weeks in long term care, while the second placement is two days a week for four weeks in community practices. As with all accredited PSW programs in the province, course topics are aligned with the Personal Support Worker Standards set by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

Third, I spoke with community workers and advocates (n = 3) with various capacities and experiences advocating for and supporting migrant caregivers as they settle into their lives within the GTA, including legal status transitions, and transitions into different occupational and/or educational pathways after completing the caregiver program. Two of the community organizers I connected with were established with the help of two York University faculty members with existing networks. I was connected to the third community worker by a PSW I interviewed who provided me their information and encouraged me to speak with them. All three community workers were Filipina women and former live-in caregivers themselves. Two of the women I spoke with, Erika and Julia, were employed at settlement services organizations in the GTA and were directly involved in migrant caregiver activism in the GTA and beyond. The third worker I spoke with, Laura, was employed at a privately-owned settlement services organization that specifically focused on supporting new immigrants (many of them caregiver migrants) find work in Toronto.

Through these interviews, I hoped to understand the needs, challenges, and strategies employed by caregivers who transition out of a caregiver program from a service-provider perspective. The questions I asked pertained to the background of the organization or community group they work with, their experience supporting caregivers in various transitions, and their insight as to why there might be an overconcentration of Filipina women in PSW occupations. In addition, they shared stories of their own experiences as migrant live-in caregivers, including their post-caregiver program labour market transitions. As a token of appreciation for their time and to

minimize the material burden of participating in this research, I offered $40 cash honoraria to participants in this group.

1.5. Thesis structure

The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 2 is an overview of the theoretical concepts guiding my research, drawing from intersectional approaches to feminist economic geography, labour market embeddedness, embodiment and interpellation, and citizenship. Chapter 3 is a contextual overview of the emergence of transnational labour migration in the Philippines and the history of temporary foreign caregiver programs in Canada. My empirical findings are discussed in the subsequent three chapters. Chapter 4 focuses on the personal and/or familial circumstances and decision-making processes that shaped caregiver immigrants' labour market trajectories upon obtaining an open work permit (OWP). Here, I call attention to the entanglements of social reproduction and experiences of exclusionary citizenship in shaping the immediate post-caregiver program transitions that former caregivers engage in. The empirical work of Chapter 5 focuses on what I term *kababayan networks* – connections with fellow Filipino immigrants – that shaped caregiver immigrants' labour market trajectories, and the different ways in which these networks linked caregiver immigrants to the PSW sector. This chapter also explores the landscape of PSW education in the GTA, and the ways in which *kababayan networks* are embedded within them. Finally, Chapter 6 explores the production and circulation of idealized PSW subjectivities from the perspectives of PSW educators and Filipina PSWs themselves. I elaborate on the ways in which racialized and gendered discourses that construct an idealized PSW subjectivity and the ways in which these discourses converge with notions of "Filipina-ness". The final chapter of this thesis summarizes the key themes and findings that emerged from this research.

Chapter 2 – Conceptual framework: Embedding and embodying labour markets

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I outline my epistemological framework and the key concepts that guide my analysis, drawing from intersectional approaches to feminist geography. I begin by linking feminist geography to intersectionality to demonstrate how these analytical sensibilities inform my research. Next, I outline how geographers conceptualize labour markets as socially embedded, politically mediated institutions, setting the foundation for understanding the local processes that constitute labour markets. Furthering this discussion, I discuss how feminist scholars have integrated embodiment and interpellation as key concepts that enhance understandings about the ways in which migrant women workers are incorporated into local labour markets. Building on this, I discuss how migration scholars conceptualize citizenship and precarious legal status as organizing principles of the labour market and dimensions through which inequalities are institutionalized. I end this chapter with a discussion of my methodology and research design.

2.2. Feminist geography and intersectionality

Feminist geography is concerned with foregrounding the experiences of women and untangling the ways in which 'gendering' is a social and spatial process (Nelson and Seager, 2005; McDowell, 1999; Oberhauser et al., 2018; Kobayashi and Peake, 1994). It is at once an intellectual pursuit emphasizing the mutual constitution of gender, place, and space, and an "explicit political commitment" to naming the structures of oppression that shape the lives of women in different ways and "making visible the workings of social power" (Nelson and Seager, 2005, p. 6). My engagement with feminist geography is informed by principles of intersectionality, which calls attention to the interlocking and interdependence of race, gender, class, citizenships, and other axes of social difference in constituting varied experiences of power, privilege, and oppression (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Hill Collins, 1999; Cho et al., 2013; Oberhauser et al., 2018). In this view, 'gender' is not positioned as the singular object of inquiry, nor are identity categories fixed or separate; as Dill and Kohlman (2012) put it, "there is no point at which race is not simultaneously classed and gendered or gender is not simultaneously raced and classed" (p. 162). Rather, intersectionality highlights the enmeshment of social identities within relational, historically constructed systems of power and domination (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1983; Hill Collins, 2000

Valentine, 2007; Oberhauser et al., 2018). Fundamental to intersectional thinking are the concepts of social difference and power, where categories of identity operate as "forceful social dynamics" that constitute relations of power, sameness, and difference, shaping the material and social realities of women according to their particular social locations (Lightman and Good Gingrich, 2013, p. 124).

As an 'analytical sensibility' (Cho et al., 2013) in feminist geography, intersectionality reveals the ways in which systems of power are expressed and reproduced through particular places and at particular times, emphasizing the spatial contingency in which social difference and power emerges, both materially and discursively (Mollet and Faria, 2018; Oberhauser et al., 2018; Valentine, 2007; Glenn, 2002; McDowell, 2015). Because intersectionality focuses less on the categories of identities themselves and more on the processes of differentiation (i.e. racialization, engendering) it reveals how these processes are embedded and shaped by socio-spatial relations that are constituted across multiple scales (Glenn, 2002, England and Stiell, 1997; Stiell and England, 1997; McDowell et al., 2007; McDowell, 2015). Thus, an intersectional lens is well-positioned for exploring questions related to the embodied subjectivities of Filipina caregivers and the institutional structures that regulate their incorporation into the Canadian labour market. In the sections that follow, I will explain the key conceptual tools that inform the way I deploy intersectionality as an analytical tool, beginning with a discussion on the social embeddedness of labour markets.

2.3. Social Embeddedness of Labour Markets

Orthodox theories conceptualize labour markets as self-regulated entities, where employment levels are governed by dynamics of competition, supply, demand, and wage mechanisms. Economic sociologist Mark Granovetter's influential work on *embeddedness*, referring to the ways in which economic behaviours and practices are situated in "concrete, ongoing systems of social relations" (Granovetter, 1985, p. 487) has been taken up by economic geographers to dispute orthodox labour market theory. Notably, economic geographer Jamie Peck (1996) conceptualizes labour markets as *socially regulated and politically mediated institutions* constituted by a "composite of several institutional dynamics", including multi-scalar systems of production, reproduction, and accumulation (p. 77; Massey, 1994; Herod, 2003; Peck and Theodore, 2011). While social practices and institutions are ubiquitous across space, the ways in which they construct labour markets are contingent on the variability and histories of local

geographies, which facilitates "different tendencies" towards labour market inequalities (Peck, 1996, p. 75). Fundamental to this conceptualization is the understanding that places are constituted by an interlocking and stretching out of social relations across a range of spatial scales (Massey, 1991, 1994); thus, the dialectic social relations that construct labour markets are not fixed to a singular spatial scale but rather, are locally embedded and conditioned by their "inherited social, economic, and institutional geographies" – what Peck (1996) terms the *production-reproduction dialectic* (Peck, 1996, p. 95; Massey, 1994).

2.3.1. Social networks and labour market segmentation

The social embeddedness of labour markets has been illustrated in scholarship about patterns of immigrant labour market segmentation and immigrant social networks. These networks can be mutually reinforcing for workers *and* employers, shaping how individuals access labour market opportunities as well as how employers construct and recruit 'ideal' workers. Waldinger and Lichter's (2003) touchstone work about how immigrant social networks organize the labour markets of six industries in Los Angeles demonstrates the "power that immigrant social networks acquire, once imported into the workplace" (p. 13). Networks function as "conduits of information" for both jobseekers and employers, sharing information about opportunities, workplace norms, and employer expectations for the former and referring the latter to a reliable source of 'pre-screened' applicants. These networks also act as "instruments of influence" in the workplace, reinforcing reliance on these ties which can result in the establishment of ethnic occupational niches. Once established in the workplace, immigrant networks can enforce workplace norms and behaviours, fostering a sense of obligation and loyalty amongst workers who are keen on maintaining their reputations to ensure continued access to job opportunities.

The embidedness of immigrant social networks in labour markets is evident in Novek's (2013) research about the experiences of Filipino health care aides (HCAs) in Winnipeg. For one, these networks were crucial for conveying information about job opportunities in the long-term care (LTC) sector in ways that addressed the challenges their fellow Filipino networks experienced in the labour market upon their migration to Canada, including credential assessment, language requirements, job insecurity, and inflexible hours. Filipino workers incentivized their co-ethnic networks to apply for HCA work in the LTC sector by emphasizing the relatively short training periods, high demand for jobs, as well as secure and high wages. Employers also leveraged the social networks of Filipino immigrants through processes of referral hiring, which enabled the expansion of Filipino workers in the HCA labour market. The embeddedness of social networks in

the HCA industry was also facilitated by the institutional landscape of HCA training and education. The HCA industry had no formal educational requirements up until the 1990s, facilitating ease of access to immigrants who have been marginalized from the labour market through lack of educational credentials recognition. While education and certification requirements have since been instated, a lack of regulation meant that this was a relatively easier niche to break into for immigrants who have been structurally excluded from the labour market. What this study emphasized is the dialectical relationship between labour markets and immigrant social networks and the ways in which they are mediated by various workplace practices and provincial regulatory policies.

While this scholarship illuminates how labour markets operate as socially embedded institutions, focusing solely on the operative power of social networks is insufficient. For one, it privileges the "supply-side theory of immigration" and could suggest that immigrant social networks operate in a linear and essentialized fashion once established in the labour market (Waldinger and Lichter, 2003 p. 85). In doing so, such analyses of labour market segmentation elide the wider structural systems of uneven global development, racism, and gender that shape the demand for immigrant labour. In response, I first turn to the literature on the global production of local labour markets and subsequently, the racialization and feminization of care work labour markets.

2.3.2. The global production of local labour markets

Saskia Sassen's (2005, 2006) *global city* thesis has been particularly useful for understanding how local labour markets are restructured by global processes, demonstrating the global re-organization of urban economies around high-end advanced producer services and the subsequent growth of service-sector employment at the bottom of the labour market. This 'new' globalized economy is marked by global inequalities in economic opportunity and wealth, with corporations centralizing their specialized knowledge and information headquarters in cities while subcontracting production to multiple suppliers worldwide, cutting down on labour costs through "complex chains of production" (Wills et al., 2009, p. 4). On one end, uneven dynamics of global development have resulted in intensified flows of transnational labour migration amongst those in search of better economic opportunities, with many immigrants gravitating towards global cities but finding themselves excluded from the desirable sectors of the labour market (Sassen, 2005, 2006; Massey, 2007; Zimmerman et al., 2006). State-led policies and practices might also reinforce the global production of *and* reliance on migrant labour, as evidenced in the institutionalization of

labour export as an economic development strategy in the Philippines – a phenomenon I will discuss in the following chapter (Rodriguez, 2010). On the other hand, the proliferation of the corporate economy has resulted in the emergence of a 'new' managerial and professional white-collar class, increasing the demand for low-status jobs in social reproduction, such as cleaning, hospitality, food services, childcare, to sustain their lifestyles and by extension, the reproduction of global capital. It is in this context that immigrants are channeled into low-waged, low status occupations through a nexus of various social and institutional mechanisms (Wills et al., 2009; Sassen, 2002; Parreñas, 2003).

For example, Wills et al. (2009) detail how the neoliberal restructuring of London into a global city – what Sassen (2006) broadly defines as a primary node in the globalized economic system – has resulted in a 'super-diverse' immigrant labour force from primarily African, Latin American, and Caribbean countries, which have come to constitute almost half of the city's 'elementary occupations' in cleaning, food preparation, construction, housekeeping, and ancillary occupations in healthcare. The authors relate this 'new' migrant division of labour to the "triple effect" of employer demands, welfare entitlement, national immigration and economic reforms, arguing that the concentration of immigrants in service-sector work is actively produced by employers and policymakers who demonstrate a preference for migrant labour. Some employers discussed how migrants' assumed *dual frame of reference* (Waldinger and Lichter, 2003) made them more motivated and diligent relative to EU-born workers because they were assumed to judge the working conditions and wages of stigmatized occupations in London in a more positive light compared to what they would have access to 'back home' (Wills et al., 2009, p. 67). Employers were also found to have developed stereotyped preferences for migrant workers; if they "had a good experience with one worker, they would be more likely to employ their friends or their national compatriots" (Wills et al., 2009, p. 76). Although Toronto is not a key player in the globalized economic system compared to London, it is not so different in the sense that they both have strong immigrant labour markets that are constituted by a significant proportion of racialized and low-wage workers in sectors such as hospitality, construction, and care work. This parallel suggests that the neoliberal restructuring of cities, whether global hubs like London or secondary cities like Toronto, relies on and perpetuates the marginalization of immigrant labour in low-wage, high-demand sectors that sustain the reproduction of global capital (Henaway, 2023; Stasiulis, 2020; Polanco, 2019).

2.3.3. Racialization of care in the global economy

In the context of globalized urban economies, scholarship has paid considerable attention to the feminization and racialization of local care labour markets (Sassen, 2002; Zimmerman et al., 2006; Eckenwiler, 2012; Kofman and Raghuram, 2015; Romero et al., 2014). The increase in the participation rate of women in the corporate sector as well as enduring gendered divisions of labour has led to the commodification of and increased demands for caring labour (Liang, 2011; Lynch, 2022; Parreñas, 2003; Sassen, 2002; Anderson, 2000). This is exacerbated by neoliberal restructuring policies that have shifted healthcare responsibilities from the state to the level of the individual and community (England, 2010; Baines and van dek Broek, 2017; Aronson and Neysmith, 1996). Thus, private households are reconfigured into economic spaces, "[creating] paid care work opportunities for women to migrate as domestic workers" (Zimmerman et al., 2006, p. 16; Bakan and Stasiulis, 1995, Bauer and Österle, 2013).

Rhacel Parreñas (2006) conceptualizes this process as the *international transfer of reproductive labour,* wherein class-privileged women in receiving countries (typically advanced economies of the Global North) hire migrant domestic workers from less economically advanced countries (typically from the Global South) to fulfill their social reproductive responsibilities to enable their participation in the labour market; the social reproductive responsibilities of women who migrate are then relegated to poorer women in their home country who lack the means to migrate. The result is a global division of labour, wherein social reproduction is "transferred between women of different classes (and possibly racial or ethnic groups in sending countries and between women of different nationalities, classes, and races or ethnicities in receiving countries" (Zimmerman et al., 2006, p. 13-14; Anderson, 2000). Arlie Hochschild (2000) conceptualizes these links through the framework of *global care chains*, referring to the transnational networks of care that form when labour migration necessitates the transfer of caregiving tasks across households. Together, this scholarship calls attention to how the uneven dynamics of globalization are constitutive of racialized and feminized labour markets marked by uneven citizenship regimes, linking women into unequal relationships of interdependence on a global scale (Eckenwiler, 2012; Romero et al., 2014; Zimmerman et al., 2006; Anderson, 2010; Bauer and Österle, 2013).

2.4. Feminist perspectives on labour markets

Feminist approaches to the study of labour markets call attention to the embeddedness of labour in gendered relations of social reproduction (Meehan and Strauss, 2015; Strauss, 2020;

Mitchell et al., 2004). From this perspective, the economic livelihoods that women engage in – that is, the diverse ways in which women make a living – are shaped by gendered power relations and intersecting dynamics of social and spatial inequalities (Oberhauser, 2018; McDowell, 2009). This perspective shifts the focus towards the individual lifeworlds – "the taken-for-granted, mundane experiences and activities of everyday life as carried out in particular spatio-temporal settings" (Dyck, 1995, p. 307) of workers, calling greater attention to the ways in which local labour markets are embodied and 'lived locally' in relation to social reproduction and social difference in space (Hanson and Pratt, 1992). Feminist geographers have expanded this discussion by integrating a lens of embodiment, calling attention to the ways in which workers are differentiated in material and discursive ways based on their embodied identities (Polanco, 2019; McDowell, 2009; McDowell et al., 2007; Liang, 2011; England and Stiell, 1997; Stiell and England, 1997). The following section will expand on this in more detail.

2.4.1. Embodiment

Feminist economic geographers employ *embodiment* as a framework to elucidate how "specific bodies" come into being through interactions with other bodies in specific spatial, temporal, and economic contexts (Moss, 2005, p. 44; McDowell, 1999, 2008, 2015; Pratt, 1998; England and Dyck, 2011). As an analytical lens, embodiment attends to the mutual and active constitution of bodies in and through space, where corporeal characteristics – skin colour, physical ability, accent, language, age, and so on – are inscribed with dynamic social meanings according to the contexts and interactions they are situated in (Moss, 2005; England and Dyck, 2011, 2012; McDowell, 2009; Stiell and England, 1997). This framework underscores how bodies are marked by social difference within "material and temporal juncture points, dripping with the minutiae of the immediate environment" (Moss, 2005, p. 44), generating insight into the ways in which individuals understand and enact their identities as workers within specific spatial and temporal contexts.

A focus on embodiment in economic geography scholarship reveals how the production of workplace subjectivities – that is, the ways in which individuals understand themselves and those around them as workers (Liu and Guo, 2024; Hanson and Pratt, 2003) – is inherently linked to the socio-spatial relations of employment, the type of labour being performed, and the embodied experiences of workers themselves. Feminist scholarship emphasizes the "fluid coming together" (Valentine, 2007, p. 14) of workplace subjectivities as deeply shaped by the intersections of race, gender, class, and other markers of social difference (McDowell, 2015). These meanings are not

static but are dynamically produced and reproduced through everyday practices, discourses, and power relations within the workplace and beyond (Pratt, 1999). The embodied characteristics of workers and the stereotyped discourses attached to them may lead workers to be evaluated as more or less appropriate for types of work or sets of tasks, resulting in racialized hierarchical evaluations of worth (McDowell, 2009; Bakan and Stasiulis, 2012; England and Dyck, 2012). As Hanson and Pratt (2003) note, subjectivity is a process that is "continuously inscribed and reinscribed through discourses, cultural representations, and everyday practices" in the workplace and beyond (p. 16).

Scholarship about migrant care work has demonstrated how gendered and racialized discourses often dictate which bodies are deemed suitable for specific types of work, reinforcing hierarchies that privilege certain identities while marginalizing others (McDowell, 2009; Pratt, 1998). For example, Liang's (2011) empirical research on the recruitment of migrant women for live-in domestic work in Taiwan elucidates how agency staff and employers construct a racialized hierarchy of 'ideal' migrant domestic women workers by mobilizing gendered-racialized ideologies in their everyday workplace practices. The recruitment agencies assessed the personalities, characteristics, and skills of domestic workers through the lens of 'ethnicity', activating and reproducing racialized discourses that linked 'ideal' workplace subjectivities with race or nationality. These practices were sometimes subtle, evident in the way that recruitment agents compared Indonesian women to indigenous Taiwanese peoples as similarly "childlike" and "naïve" to articulate their desire to recruit a disciplined and submissive workforce (Liang, 2011, p. 1820). Gendered-racialized discourses were activated overtly, too, through the creation of websites that advertised workers based on their 'biodata', including their skin tone, body odor, and whether they could eat pork to identify Muslim workers (Liang, 2011, p. 1824-1825). Here, recruiters described dark skin – such as that of Filipina and Indonesian women – as a signal of 'dirtiness' and 'stupidity', whereas lighter skin tones – for example, of Vietnamese women – signalled familiarity and inclusion for Taiwanese families (Liang, 2011, p. 1825). These racialized discourses influenced how recruitment agencies matched women of different ethnic backgrounds to specific positions, with Filipina women matched to more "maid" roles compared to Vietnamese women who were framed as better "care workers".

In another classic example, England and Stiell's (1997) research on migrant domestic workers in Toronto elucidates how the national identities of domestic women workers came to "signify a group's proclivity for domestic work as well as the quality of care that they provide" in

relation to other groups (p. 195). The assumptions of employers, placement agency staff, and migrant domestic women workers themselves about the 'natural aptitudes' of certain nationalities for specific skills were articulated through interlocking discourses about language, ethnicity, skin colour, and accent. For instance, whereas knowledge of the English language was viewed as a source of prestige and respect for white British domestic workers, the English language skills of racialized migrant domestic workers was not viewed in a positive light. The assumption that Filipina women lacked English language skills led recruitment and matchmaking agencies to view Filipina women as more 'docile, quiet, and hardworking' and thus, more likely to accept challenging working conditions and low pay without complaining (England and Stiell,1997, p. 207). On the other hand, the English language skills of Jamaican domestic workers led recruitment agencies to perceive them as more 'aggressive', as they were able to voice their concerns about wages and working conditions (England and Stiell, 1997, p. 210). Through these 'domestic distinctions', the authors illuminate how embodiment is inherently relational, and the valuation of a particular group of workers often occurs alongside the devaluation of others (Bakan and Stasiulis, 1997; Stiell and England, 1997; Liang, 2011).

This scholarship illustrates how racialized and gendered discourses are marked on the bodies of workers in ways that shape their embodied experiences of work in the labour market and beyond. These discourses are activated and reproduced by workers, managers, and employers in ways that normalize racialized hierarchies of inequality in the labour market and reinforce systems of power that privilege certain workers while marginalizing others. This is not to say that workers lack the agency to construct their own subjectivities nor to suggest that dominant discourses are ideologically fixed. Rather, workers actively negotiate, challenge, or re-interpret their subjectivities across various contexts. Drawing from Foucault's theorization of the "workings of power through the blurred material and discursive constructions of bodies", for example, Geraldine Pratt (1998) explores how Filipina migrant domestic workers resist the stereotype of the "sexually available object" through their embodied actions (p. 211). For instance, some of the women discussed not combing their hair or wearing large clothing to control what and how their employers perceived their bodies, at once acknowledging these stereotypes but refusing to become subject to them. Thus, as McDowell (2009) aptly notes "Identities are not fixed as people enter the workplace, but are open, negotiable, shifting and ambiguous" (p. 54).

2.4.2. Interpellation

Economic geographers have adapted Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser's concept of *interpellation* to understand how workers internalize, enact, and negotiate workplace subjectivities (Mitchell et al., 2004; Terry, 2014; McDowell et al., 2007; Batnizky and McDowell, 2011). Althusser conceptualized interpellation as a process through which individuals are 'hailed', or called upon, to recognize their subject positions within hegemonic ideologies (Althusser, 2006, p. 105). This process of being hailed prompts an immediate awareness and internalization of one's subject position within an ideological structure. Processes of interpellation therefore reinforce and reproduce hegemonic ideologies and social relations.

However, feminist economic geographers complicate this framework by emphasizing the agency of workers in negotiating – rather than passively internalizing – managerial ideologies. I align my use and understanding of interpellation with Linda McDowell and her collaborators, who argue that interpellation is a "fluid and malleable" process of subject formation (McDowell et al., 2007, p. 5; Batnizky and McDowell, 2011). McDowell et al. (2007) utilize the concept as a tool to analyze how employers, managers, and consumers *name* workers within constructions of "idealized or stereotypical notions of idealized workers", informing how individuals come to recognize or internalize themselves as workers (p. 5; Batnizky and McDowell, 2011, p. 186). Unlike Althusser's structural approach to ideology as hegemonic and all-encompassing, McDowell et al.'s (2007) feminist perspective emphasizes the negotiated and mutable nature of subject formation, underscoring the agentic capacity of workers to engage with, contest, or subvert these 'managerial fantasies' (p. 5). This agency enables resistance, as workers deploy various strategies to embody their own identities and "challenge the dissonances between their own desires and self-identities and managerial/client expectations" (Wright, 1997, p. 56; cited in McDowell et a., 2007, p. 6). Nevertheless, McDowell et al. (2007) notes that the desires of workers "do not always conflict with the interpellation of managers", and resistance is not necessarily expected (p. 6). Citing Christine Williams (2006), they recall how workers are incentivized to "consent and embrace the stereotypes (employed by management) since their opportunities depend on their conformity to these managerial imaginings" (p. 55, cited in McDowell et al., 2007, p. 6).

Drawing from McDowell (2009; Batnizky and McDowell, 2011), I view interpellation as a useful tool for analyzing how individuals understand themselves as workers through the confluence of the type of labour and tasks being performed, the embodied characteristics of workers, and underlying power structures of social differentiation. Interpellation offers a lens

through which to understand how inequalities and workplace hierarchies are constituted in relation to wider labour processes *and* the ways in which workers construct their subjectivities (McDowell, 2015; Mitchell et al., 2004). Although Althusser's original formulation of interpellation was concerned with the reproduction of state ideologies and social relations, McDowell (2009) emphasizes how power relationships of race, gender, and citizenship shapes attitudes about what constitutes 'idealized' or 'appropriate' workplace subjectivities. This is especially pertinent in the context of caring labour, which involves dimensions of emotional labour and body work (Dyer et al., 2008). Here, the expectations and demands of providing an appropriate "experience" of care may lead workers to feel 'called upon' to manipulate their emotions and behaviours to meet the expectations of managers, employers, *and* consumers, even if doing so would conflict with their own desires and understandings of self (Huang et al., 2012; McDowell et al., 2007).

The 'managerial fantasies' of 'idealized' workplace subjectivities are comprised not just of the skills, temperaments, and knowledges that employers/managers and consumers deem desirable, but also of discourses that perceive certain traits or attributes as innate to certain genders, ethnicities, nationalities, or classes (Huang et al., 2012). Terry (2014) argues that these discourses are 'operative' in how they naturalize certain bodies and identities as inherently suited for some types of work over others, shaping how workers are sorted within the labour market and across workplaces. In this way, interpellation is useful for understanding the multiple ways in which labour market segmentation is linked to the discursive construction of racialized and gendered workplace subjectivities because it illustrates how workers are 'called' into specific roles in relation to their embodied identities as gendered, racialized, and classed subjects.

These dynamics are evident in studies of migrant care work, where racialized and gendered stereotypes shape patterns of labour market segmentation. Adina Batnizky and Linda McDowell (2011) employ interpellation to demonstrate how the circulation and internalization of dominant discourses that frame Caribbean and South Asian migrant nurses as less-educated and less-skilled by institutional actors, employers, and nurses themselves led to their segmentation into lower-status nursing positions. The migrant nurses in this study discussed how they were initially recruited by the National Health Service (NHS) from the 1950s-1980s for the State Registered Nursing (SRN) pathway, but were placed by the NHS lower-skilled State Enrolled Nursing (SEN) stream. This was despite their education and experience levels as well as their expressed intentions to register as SRN nurses. A nurse from Trinidad and Tobago named Georgina, for instance, discussed how she was forced to conform to the SEN program due to "subterfuge and

management dishonesty" insisting she failed her exam for the SRN stream (Batnizky and McDowell, 2011, p. 192). The fear of being 'many thousand miles away from home' compelled her to accept the SEN program instead of resisting her channeling into the SEN program.

In another example, a nurse from Jamaica named Gardenia, who obtained her educational qualifications from a local institution in Birmingham, recalled how interviewers questioned whether she had the requisite educational requirements to pursue the SRN stream. They assumed she lacked the educational requirements for the SRN stream and insisted on placing her in the SEN stream. It was not until she called their 'bluff' and demonstrated her educational requirements that they accepted her into SRN training. Her story illustrates how her positionality as a foreign-born Black woman from the Caribbean resulted in her differential treatment despite her British education. However, the authors note that her story was an exceptional one, and most of the nurses in their study were channeled towards SEN training. Consequently, the migrant workers expressed high levels of job dissatisfaction and a loss of confidence in their skills as "they internalized managers' views of their inferior abilities" (Batnizky and McDowell, 2011, p. 190). Batnizky and McDowell (2011) demonstrate interpellation at work, as the Caribbean and South Asian migrant nurses were 'called' into lower-status nursing roles through dominant discourses that framed them as less-skilled and less-educated, despite their qualifications and intentions. By operationalizing these racialized and gendered narratives, both the nurses and institutional actors perpetuated their segmentation into the SEN stream, elucidating how interpellation naturalizes and reinforces labor market inequalities.

Existing scholarship has also shown how interpellation can reproduce idealized, socially constructed stereotypes of Filipino workers as disciplined, compliant, loyal, and hardworking in ways that disadvantage them in the labour market (Terry, 2014; Polanco, 2017; Kelly and D'Addario, 2007). For example, Christiansen et al.'s (2025) work about Filipino migrant nurses in the Icelandic healthcare system found that Icelandic employers seek out foreigners because "most of [them] do not complain" (p. 7). The expectation of the 'ideal, compliant worker' contradicted the nurses' own transnational identities as proud, highly skilled and educated healthcare professionals, yet they felt compelled to negotiate these expectations in ways that conflicted with their own sense of self. The nurses described how Icelandic colleagues devalued their educational backgrounds and on-the-job proficiencies because of their racialized identities, and the "conflation of Icelandicness with competence" (Christiansen et al., 2025, p. 11). In one example, a Filipina nurse in a supervisory role named Elena described how a staff member refused to follow her instructions

because of her 'foreignness', explaining "that when the subordinate looked her up and down, the subordinate doubted that someone who did not look Icelandic could be a supervisor" (Christiansen et al., 2025, p. 8). The nurses also described frequent encounters of disrespect by Icelandic family members of patients who refused to talk to Filipino nurses assuming they had poor language skills and demanding to speak to Icelandic nurses instead. When encountering these situations, the nurses described feeling compelled to comply with these requests, perform a calm and respectful demeanour, and walk away from conflict, even if they felt snubbed or disrespected.

This study demonstrates how interpellation *works* in how workers negotiate what is expected of them as racialized migrant nurses and their own transnational identities as dedicated, professional, and skilled nurses. Their work points to the ways in which Filipino workers are not expected to be in managerial roles, and when they are, they encounter resistance because their positions do not conform with what is expected of them within the dominant cultural ethos. Additionally, this work points to the ways in which race is involved in constructions of workplace competency and authority; 'managerial fantasies' are not just produced by those in position of authority within workplaces, but also those who may see themselves as superior to 'foreign others'. Thus, my usage of interpellation calls attention to ways in which we can better understand how structures of differentiation regulate the experiences of migrant workers in relation to processes of identity formation and subjectification.

Taken together, embodiment and interpellation have been particularly generative for exploring how inequalities are constituted in labour markets, particularly along racialized and gendered dimensions (Batnizky and McDowell, 2011; Dyer et al., 2008; Kelly and D'Addario, 2007; McDowell, 2015; McDowell et al., 2007; Huang et al., 2012). The following section will expand this discussion by discussing how citizenship regimes contextualize the ways in which racialized migrant women are incorporated into local labour markets, operating as another dimension through which social relations are embodied, and inequalities are experienced.

2.5. Citizenship and precarious legal status

Modern citizenship is conventionally understood as a legal status category that identifies an individual's membership to a sovereign nation-state and their associated sets of social, civil, and political rights and/or entitlements (Glenn, 2002). By legally identifying the conditions in which an individual does or does not belong, citizenship regimes establish the boundaries of a nation-state's exclusive 'national family' and controls the flow of 'foreign Others' within and across

borders (Sharma, 2006; Glenn, 2002). Citizenship therefore contains a territorializing component as it seeks to draw social boundaries between those who are deemed undesirable, unfit, or unworthy from belonging and accessing coveted rights and freedoms (Ong et al.,1996; Bauder, 2008; Stasiulis and Bakan, 2003; Glenn, 2002; Sharma, 2006). Importantly, citizenship regimes have moved away from binaries of citizen and non-citizen towards a composite of stratified legal status categories – from "citizen", "permanent resident", or "temporary migrant worker" – indicating varied degrees of belonging, rights, and mobilities (Goldring et al., 2009; Anderson, 2010; Goldring and Landolt, 2013; Polanco, 2019; Lewis et al., 2015).

Immigration policy can therefore be conceptualized as labour market policy, as one's legal status dictates the "parameters under which they can participate", the employment opportunities that are accessible to them, and the overall conditions that shape how workers are incorporated into the local labour market (Bauder, 2006, p. 24; Ruhs and Anderson, 2010; Goldring and Landolt, 2011). Those with full citizenship are granted open, unrestricted access to the primary segment of the labour market – where jobs are characterized by high wages, stability, and elevated social status – as an exclusive benefit of membership in the 'national family'. Conversely, non-citizens are "either excluded from the labour market altogether or their participation is tightly controlled", which results in their segmentation into the secondary segment of the labour market where jobs are often stigmatized, characterized by poor working conditions, and receive low compensation (Bauder, 2006, p. 26; Waldinger and Lichter, 2003; Peck, 1996; Sharma, 2006).

2.5.1. Temporary foreign work programs and the social production of noncitizenship

Bridget Anderson (2010) contends that precarious migrant workers are fashioned not simply through the *absence* of legal status, but through immigration policies that institutionalize a highly regulated process of illegalization. Differentiated entrant categories operate as 'filters' permitting those with desirable skills, experience, but also acceptable country of origin, age, and social ties into the nationalized labour market "while filtering out undesirables" (Anderson, 2010, p. 307). Entrant categories also define the conditions that must be met to remain in the country as well as the rules that structure an individual's access to the labour market and the types of employment they may engage in. In the UK context that Anderson (2010) writes about, for example, migrants entering through the Tier 2 category or below – which encompasses temporary work in 'low-skilled' occupations – must be continuously sponsored by an employer to remain in the country. However, these employment contracts are often fixed-term and temporary and employers

may choose to terminate the contract at any point, for any reason. As a result, migrant workers are rendered vulnerable as their legal right to remain in the country is dependent on the "goodwill of their employer", who may exploit this as a mechanism of labour control (Anderson, 2010, p. 309). Thus, Anderson's (2010) framework explains how legal status operates as a mechanism of labour market precarity through the creation of hierarchical migrant entrant categories that influence uneven employment relations and institutionalize uncertainty around legality (p. 307).

In the Canadian context, the role of immigration policy in constituting precarious legal status – and by extension, labour market precarity – is especially salient in the landscape of temporary foreign worker programs (TFWPs), where migrant workers – typically from poor, formerly colonized countries in the Global South – enter the country via temporary work visas for employment in jobs that form the lowest segments of the labour market (Henaway, 2023; Polanco, 2019; Lenard and Straehle, 2012; Choudry and Smith, 2016). A hallmark of TFWPs is the highly restrictive and disciplinary conditions imposed on migrant workers' mobilities, rights, and freedoms vis-à-vis their work permits (Strauss and McGrath, 2017; Walia, 2021; Sharma, 2006). The jobs temporary foreign workers perform tend to be devalued, stigmatized, and racialized given their position at the bottom of the labour market, which contributes to poor working conditions and the 'abasing' of the worker (Polanco, 2019; Choudry and Smith, 2016). These conditions underpin the basis of *unfreedom* within TFWPs, wherein the differential inclusion of non-citizens into the nation-state is contingent on the capture of their labour power and their exclusion from the political, economic, and social privileges associated with full citizenship (Sharma, 2006, p. 19; Walia, 2021; Stasiulis, 2020; Henaway, 2023).

Importantly, Luin Goldring and Patricia Landolt (2013, 2022) theorize the production of labour market precarity vis-à-vis precarious legal status categories like the 'temporary foreign worker' designation as an *assemblage* enacted through *conditionality*, referring to the contingency surrounding an individual's right to "*remain present* within a national territory and to *access* entitlements and social goods, including the labour market" (emphasis added, Landolt and Goldring, 2015, p. 857). Like Anderson's (2010) framework, the authors contend that noncitizenship is actively produced, contested, and negotiated through the *work* of social and institutional actors, mediated by migrants' own agency, state policies, and underlying social and power dynamics (Goldring and Landolt, 2013, p. 15; Landolt and Goldring, 2015). This perspective frames the boundaries of citizenship as "fuzzy and permeable" rather than fixed or discrete, foregrounding possibilities to move between and across different categories of citizenship (Landolt

and Goldring, 2013, p. 172). Relatedly, it emphasizes how the social relations of precarity produced within experiences of noncitizenship are "sticky", producing "baggage" that follows individuals even as they move through different legal status categories. This perspective retains a focus on the socio-legal contours of citizenship while also attending to the ways in which "legal status operates as a dimension of social location", intersecting with other axes of differentiation to produce unequal life experiences and social locations (Goldring and Landolt, 2013, p. 172).

Precarious legal status categories (Goldring et al., 2009; Goldring and Landolt, 2022) like TFWPs therefore have the effect of territorializing local labour markets by precluding those marked by less-than-full status from accessing certain segments of the labour market (Strauss and McGrath, 2017; Walia, 2021; Sharma, 2006). Thus, the experience of being incorporated into the nation state through precarious legal status "imposes severe limits on migrants' post-regularization work experiences" even after migrants move into a more secure legal status (Goldring and Landolt, 2013, p. 155). This can be understood as a process of *differential inclusion,* which "refers to the dynamic, hierarchical and relational classification and sorting of groups and individuals that produces gradations of inclusion, exclusion; precarity and vulnerability; inclusion without belonging" (Goldring and Landolt, 2022, p. 34; Parreñas et al., 2021). Organizing labour relations around stratified categories of citizenship naturalizes migrant workers' exclusion from primary segments of nationalized labour markets given their position as non-citizen subjects while also reifying the structural precarity they experience (Sharma, 2006; Walia, 2021; Goldring and Landolt, 2013; Buckley and Reid-Musson, 2018).

Patricia Landolt and Luin Goldring's (2011, 2013) empirical work on Latin American and Caribbean immigrant workers' post-regularization work experiences in the GTA finds that workers' social experiences of non-citizen precarious status increased their likelihood of remaining in precarious employment even after transitioning into a secure legal status category. The "adverse terms of incorporation" (Phillips, 2013) that shaped their inclusion as temporary migrant workers – including different social security numbers, employer-tied work permits, and restricted access to social supports – had long-lasting negative effects on the quality of their future jobs, which were characterized by non-unionization, short-term or temporary work contracts, spatially dispersed workplaces, a lack of benefits, and low pay often in the form of cash. Even if migrant workers obtained full status, the experience of precarious legal status remained a 'sticky' source of vulnerability that continued to shape their labour market outcomes, even if they were able to move into more secure legal status (Goldring and Landolt, 2011; 2013). As Linda Bosniak aptly describes,

non-citizen migrants “remain outsiders in a significant sense: the border effectively follows them inside” (Bosniak, 2006, p. 4; cited in Polanco, 2019, p. 24).

Similarly, Lightman et al. (2021) elucidate how migration to Canada under the auspices of Canada’s Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) is constitutive of poor economic outcomes relative to other non-TFWP migration streams. The authors compared the income trajectories of Filipina and non-Filipina women across three immigration entry classes, the LCP, the Federal Skilled Worker Class, and the Family Class, from 1996-2016. Their descriptive statistical analysis revealed that Filipina immigrants in the LCP had higher mean monthly incomes relative to non-Filipina LCP immigrants upon arrival, however, Filipina immigrants earned less than non-Filipina immigrants in other entry classes (Figure 4). Their findings illustrate that Filipina caregiver immigrants in Canada are structurally disadvantaged as a result of (1) the mechanisms of deskilling embedded in the LCP; (2) the devaluation of care work in the labour market; and (3) processes of racialization that code Filipina women as caregivers and domestic workers, which can have “a wider stigmatizing effect” that may even truncate the employment opportunities and earnings trajectories of Filipina women who enter Canada through other immigration categories (Lightman et al., 2021, p. 42).

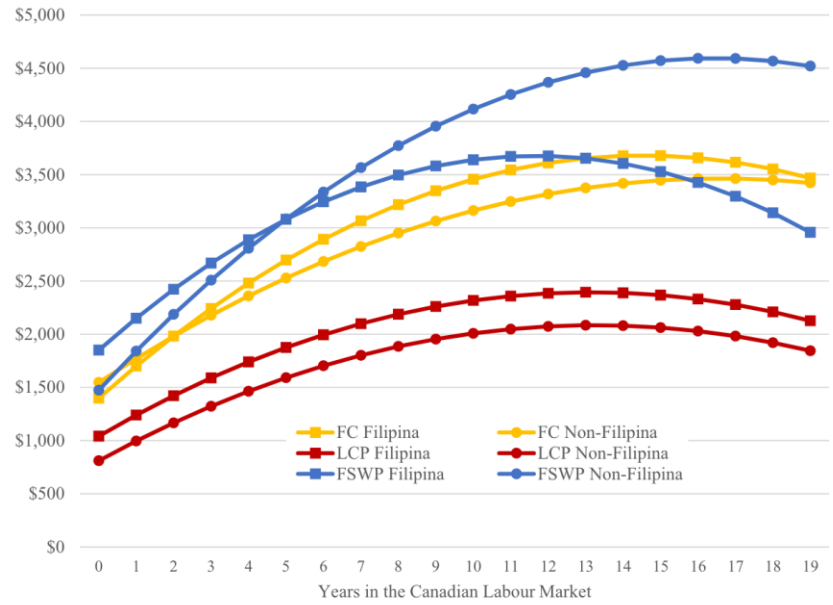


FIGURE 6 Mean Monthly Income Trajectories for Filipina vs. Non-Filipina, by Entry Class, Immigrant Women in Canada ($2016)

Figure 4. Mean monthly income trajectories for Filipina vs non-Filipina immigrants by entry class between Filipina LCP immigrants and non-Filipina immigrants in other entry classes (Lightman et al., 2021, p. 42)

This scholarship therefore reveals how experiences of noncitizenship are fundamental to the ways in which immigrants are incorporated into labour markets – particularly as noncitizenship intersects with axes of racialization, gender, class, and other dimensions of social differentiation (Landolt and Goldring, 2013, p. 170; Parreñas et al., 2021). This is because rather than operating on a 'tabula rasa', local labour markets 'inherit' existing social stratifications of gender, class, race, citizenship, and other axes of difference in ways that shape individuals' experiences in the labour market (Peck, 1996; Sassen, 2006; Waldinger and Lichter, 2003; Henaway, 2023; Stasiulis, 2020). Thus, the ways in which citizenship regimes regulate labour markets are also shaped by the embeddedness of immigration pathways within enduring systems of racialization, patriarchy, and legacies of imperialism that have produced a global division of social reproductive labour (Kofman and Raghuram, 2015; Parreñas, 2003; Henaway, 2023; Stasiulis, 2020).

Conceptualizing legal citizenship as a continuum of legality and precarity (Goldring and Landolt, 2011; 2013; 2022; Goldring et al., 2009; Lewis et al., 2015; Polanco, 2019) lends itself to a more nuanced understanding of the inequalities experienced by migrant workers who are differentially included into the nation-state. Importantly, feminist scholars argue that "the boundaries of citizenship and non-citizenship are not fixed in time or space"; individuals may move between categories of citizenship and non-citizenship through ongoing processes of naturalization, regularization, or irregularization (Goldring and Landolt, 2013, p. 5). Furthermore, the dynamics of unfreedom that characterize exclusionary citizenship regimes do not preclude individuals from engaging in political acts, as those with precarious status nevertheless possess agency to participate in various civic and social mobilizations to exercise their political rights (Tungohan, 2012; Bakan and Stasiulis, 2005; Pratt, 2012). Rhacel Parreñas (2011) deploys *indentured mobility* as an analytic that recognizes the hampered autonomy of migrant workers under exclusionary migration regimes and neoliberal capitalist economies that render international labour migration necessary for social reproduction and survival, while also foregrounding their capacity for agency and mobility within these circumstances. Thus, migrant women whose labour market opportunities are constrained by exclusionary citizenship regimes are not simply 'helpless victims' in a cycle of neoliberal global capitalism, but agentic actors whose labour market experiences are shaped by complex dynamics of coercion, control, and choice (Parreñas, 2011; Schwiter et al., 2018). Conceptualizing citizenship in this way allows for an analysis of the ways in which citizenship is not just a set of legal categories, but also an ongoing, substantive, negotiated, and relational process

of belonging and self-making embedded within wider processes of social differentiation (Parreñas et al., 2021; Bakan and Stasiulis, 2003, 2005; Goldring and Landolt, 2013; Sassen, 2006).

2.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I provided an overview of the theoretical concepts guiding my research as situated within the frameworks of intersectionality and feminist geography. In the first section, I discussed how feminist geographers have taken up intersectionality as an analytical sensibility attending to the ways in which women's material and social realities are shaped by interlocking relationships of power and social differentiation (Oberhauser et al., 2018). This approach is well aligned with conceptualizing labour markets as socially embedded and politically mediated institutions because it emphasizes the multi-scalar, historical-material systems of power that underpin the ways in which local labour market processes take place. This is particularly relevant for understanding the racialization and feminization of the care economy, foregrounding how uneven relationships of global development are re-scaled in ways that channel racialized migrant women from the Global South into social reproductive roles in the Global North. Feminist geographers have integrated a focus on *embodiment* and *interpellation* to link the institutional with the discursive – calling attention to how identity and subject-making processes are entangled with systems of production and labour control. Finally, I ended this chapter by discussing how (non)citizenship functions as a particularly significant axis of power and inequality in the labour market due to its 'sticky-ness', producing a continuum of illegality and precarity.

Building on these dialogues, my research on the occupational transitions of Filipina caregiver immigrants to personal support worker roles aims to respond to Linda McDowell's (2015) call for a labour geography that is attentive to the multi-scalar linkages between the structural forces shaping workers' lived experiences and their relations, global flows of capital, and the "embodied performance of class, ethnicity, and gender" (McDowell, 2015, p. 18). This approach is informed by Judith Butler's (1997) argument that discursive practices are not "merely cultural" but are implicated in the wider economic and material structures that underpin production, social reproduction, and accumulation (cited in Wright, 2006, p. 7). Thus, I developed my conceptual framework with the intention of bridging the political economy of labour and migration to the particularities of identity-formation and subjectification to better understand how and why Filipina former live-in caregivers become overwhelmingly concentrated in personal support worker roles. Because paid caregiving labour has predominantly been performed by racialized migrant workers,

a theoretical framework that foregrounds the social relations of difference in the labour market *and* the institutional mechanisms that constitute local labour markets is crucial (Stiell and England, 1997). The following chapter will detail the historical and contemporary contexts necessary for understanding the migration and labour market experiences of Filipina former caregivers in Canada.

Chapter 3 – Philippine Labour Export, Canadian Caregiver Programs, and the PSW Sector

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I lay out the historical and contemporary contexts in which to understand the segmentation of Filipina former live-in caregivers into PSW occupations. I begin this chapter by discussing the establishment of labour export policy in the Philippines under President Ferdinand Marcos, calling attention to the state's adherence to neoliberal ideologies. Then, I outline the expansion of temporary foreign caregiver programs in Canada, calling attention to the racialized logics that underpin exclusionary categories of 'migrant worker' and displays of activism that led to various changes to the programs. Here, I pay specific attention to the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) given the fact that most arrivals were women from the Philippines (Kelly et al., 2011). Lastly, I end the chapter with an overview of the PSW industry and labour market in Ontario.

3.2. Labour export policy: Migration as development in the Philippines

Labour export emerged as a formal economic development strategy in the postcolonial era under the dictatorial government of President Ferdinand Marcos. Under the Marcos presidency, the Philippine state sought to align itself with the emerging global neoliberal paradigm by embracing export-oriented development strategies and IMF-imposed structural adjustment programs (San Juan, 2011; Rother, 2022). However, the "trickle-down" benefits of neoliberal reforms promoting economic liberalization, privatized state assets, and reduced state spending failed to materialize and ameliorate the country's debt crisis, which led to chronic unemployment, poverty, and landlessness. It is in this context that the Marcos government institutionalized labour export through the establishment of the Labour Code in 1974 (San Juan, 2011; Rodriguez, 2010) The Philippine government framed labour migration as a strategy for alleviating federal debt, poverty, and underemployment (Rother, 2022; Rodriguez, 2010; Ball, 1997). However, as an export-oriented development strategy, this only served to reinforce the control of supranational financial institutions on the Philippines' economy and worsen conditions of poverty and underdevelopment (Lindio-McGovern, 2012, 2024; Rodriguez, 2010).

Since the establishment of the Labour Code, a highly coordinated bureaucracy comprised of various government agencies has emerged in the Philippines to increase the state's capacity and

"responsiveness to growing international demand for temporary workers" and, in essence, mobilize Philippine nationals for work abroad (Ball, 1997, p. 1617; Rodriguez, 2010; Lindio-McGovern, 2012). Key among these included the Overseas Development Board, the Bureau of Employment Services, and the National Seamen Board, which were consolidated into the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) in 1982 as the primary governmental body monitoring overseas workers. These agencies were tasked with mobilizing Filipino nationals to meet the growing international demand for temporary workers and monitoring the welfare of Filipinos abroad.

Successive Philippine governments have routinely denied having a policy of development through labour export despite ongoing rhetoric that overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) represent the 'economic saviours' of the nation, as President Joseph Estrada suggested in his 1998 State of the Nation Address (Moore, 2019, p. 42). Still, the various agencies that comprise the Philippines' "labour export web" (Lindio-McGovern, 2012) continue to tightly regulate overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) to ensure they are trained in ways that increase their competitiveness in global labour markets. For instance, Robyn Rodriguez (2010) outlined how the POEA has regional desk chairs in almost every part of the world tasked with developing labour market forecasts and trends to facilitate the entry of Philippine workers into specific industries. Labour Attachés and POEA bureaucrats engage in transnational 'marketing missions' with the specific purpose of "[generating] interest in Philippine workers among prospective employers" and securing bi-lateral labour agreements with labour-importing states (Rodriguez, 2010, p. 59). Given this highly coordinated and purposeful apparatus, the Philippines has transformed into what Rodriguez (2010) terms a "labour brokerage state, an intensified manifestation of neoliberal development that renders the nation-state's regulatory regime as "something of an 'export-processing zone'" (p. xiv). Consequently, Philippine nationals are commoditized and recognized as one of the principal export commodities driving economic development. An estimated 2.33 million Filipinos were deployed in 2023 as Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), generating US$3.6 billion 8.5% of the country's GDP (Balita, 2024; Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, 2024). Of the almost 3 million Filipino nationals leaving the Philippines as migrant labourers, Filipina women accounted for almost 58% of OFWs leaving the Philippines in 2023 (Balita, 2024).

It is important to note that the expansion of labour export policy in the Philippines is deeply connected to enduring colonial relations under American imperialism, which have historically organized the state's economic relations and development pathways around systematic labour

export. Immigration laws that designated Filipinos as U.S. nationals but not citizens meant that Filipinos were given "intracolonial movement" privileges that facilitated their recruitment for labour in the United States – first for sugar and agricultural production and later to enhance the empire's professional labour forces in healthcare, science, and enlistment the U.S. navy (Moore, 2019, p. 38; Espiritu, 2010). While these earlier waves of migration were mainly Filipino men, the Exchange Visitor Program (EVP) of the 1960s, which enabled visitors to work and study at U.S. institutions, was crucial for institutionalizing the large-scale migration of Filipina nurses – most of whom were women – to the U.S. (Choy, 2003; Moore, 2019). The colonial policies, discourses, and projects of the United States thus sought to commodify Filipinos and their labour power, which laid the foundations for the postcolonial expansion of labour export policy in the 1970s under the Marcos dictatorship.

3.2.1. Producing the 'comparative advantage' of Filipino OFWs

The institutional and systematic deployment of Filipino workers abroad is, in part, facilitated by broader discursive practices that encourage and naturalize labour migration as an economic strategy. This is evident in the mandatory pre-departure orientation seminars (PDOSs) that would-be OFWs take as part of their preparations for work abroad. PDOSs are meant to empower migrant workers with the cultural, place-based knowledge needed for life abroad, logistical matters related to visa documentation, and practical and diverse skills required to be competitive workers in the global labour market. While this information can support and empower OFWs as they integrate into their new destinations and workplaces, Geraldina Polanco argues that PDOS workshops simultaneously operate as market-driven processes of subjectification as they seek to "socialize subjects with the cultural aptitudes for competition in saturated markets" and link migrant workers' social qualities and subjectivities to processes of production and capital accumulation (Polanco, 2017, p. 73; Polanco, 2019; Guevarra, 2010). This is accomplished by curating workshop curricula to "culturally tailor" OFWs to the everyday social norms, expectations, and behaviours that are expected of them in the places they are contracted to, which enables them to foster favourable relations with their employers and assert their superiority relative to other workers (Polanco, 2017). This flexible and adaptable socio-cultural subjectivity constitutes OFWs' "comparative advantage" and "added export value" (Guevarra, 2010) that the Philippine state seeks to capitalize on in the global race to the bottom for migrant workers (Polanco, 2017; Tungohan, 2021; Rodriguez, 2010). As Rodriguez (2010) aptly summarizes:

> To hire Filipinos, then, is to hire workers who offer distinctive cultural attitudes, embodied capacities, and skills that make them ostensibly more desirable than other nationalities of workers. Not only does the state train a wide range of workers (through the migration bureaucracy) who can perform a vast array of jobs (from construction to hotel workers, medical workers to professional/ managerial), the state can guarantee employers specific kinds of racialized workers — Filipino workers — who possess essentialized traits. (p. 63).

The production of OFWs' 'comparative advantage' occurs within a wider context through which the state encourages OFWs to see themselves as "colonial subjects" and "national ambassadors" representing Philippine interests abroad (Tungohan, 2021). For instance, Ethel Tungohan (2021) observed how PDOS curriculums seek to bolster feelings of patriotism and loyalty to the nation-state by singing the national anthem and chanting various slogans throughout the workshop. The discursive ethos of heroism and sacrifice is meant to empower and encourage Filipinos. Yet, ideologies that encourage subservience to employers and to the Philippines for the sake of the Filipino family have the effect of reproducing colonial mentalities and reorienting citizenship around participation in the neoliberal strategy of labour export (Tungohan, 2021; Polanco, 2019; Rodriguez, 2010). Here, one's value and belonging to the nation is measured by the remittances they send back to support the country's economic development (Polanco, 2019; Guevarra, 2010; Lindio-McGovern, 2013; Rodriguez, 2010). For instance, one of the underlying commonalities amongst the PDOS workshops that Polanco (2017) attended was the 'ease' through which migrant workers could remit their earnings back to the Philippines, which speaks to the ways in which remitting earnings to the Philippines is rendered a 'nationalist duty' for national belonging (Rodriguez, 2010, p. 81). Furthermore, existing research demonstrates how PDOS do not equip migrants with an awareness of the types of rights and legal protections they have abroad, which suggests that OFWs themselves are responsible for their own welfare and for maintaining cordial relations with employers, which they can do by embodying a commodified OFW subjectivity (Tungohan, 2021; Rodriguez and Schwenken, 2013).

3.2.2. The gendered production of the 'model migrant' subjectivity

The production of "model" migrant worker subjectivities is also a highly gendered process. Guevarra (2010, 2022) argues that the feminization of labour migration is underscored by a *racialized and gendered moral economy of migration*, which disciplines the ways in which migrant workers "embody an ethic of responsibility toward their families and nation and represent the "Great Filipino Worker" while maintaining their commodification to a neoliberal state" (Guevarra, 2022, p. 140). In a context of enduring traditional gender ideologies in the Philippines, the labour

migration of women is seen as a negotiated form of mothering and a strategy for maintaining the social reproduction of the family, while the labour migration of men is seen as fulfilling the male breadwinner role (Parreñas, 2003, p. 64). While "Migration is cast as truly "heroic" only if migrants support national developmental goals through their regular remittance sending" (Rodriguez, 2010, p. 85), the duty to send remittances to their families in the Philippines is often embedded in gendered messages. For instance, Tungohan (2021) observed how PDOSs for seafaring men acknowledge that they may use their earnings to go out and de-stress, whereas PDOSs for domestic workers – the majority of whom were women – "admonished OFWs who spent their earnings on material goods" instead of prioritizing their children and families (p. 43). Furthermore, whereas PDOSs for seafaring men emphasized practicing agency and responsible sexual practices, PDOSs for domestic workers stressed the importance of embodying a 'Maria Clara' demeanor: being chaste, modest, and deflecting male attention.

In addition to the diffusion of gendered norms in PDOS workshops, Rodriguez (2010) outlined how brochures produced by the POEA for potential labour-receiving states utilized language such as 'warm', 'caring', 'flexible', and 'patient' alongside images of Filipina women as nurses, maids, and caregivers. This language characterizes Filipinas – and their labour power – as flexible, malleable, global commodities while also 'selling' their labour through an essentialized understanding of their 'natural' caregiving capabilities (Rodriguez, 2010). Through this logic, Filipina women were constructed as 'ideal' migrant workers for care occupations based on their capacity and willingness to adapt to the demands for global reproductive labour in service to the nation state. In an institutional and discursive environment that promotes labour migration as a dominant economic strategy, becoming a migrant worker and remitting one's foreign earnings is feminized as "an opportunity, even a duty, of sisters and daughters" (Kelly and D'Addario, 2007 p. 93). Furthermore, Filipina migrant women are expected to endure the negative impacts of long-term transnational labour migration – such as family separation, challenging working conditions, and even instances of abuse, exploitation, or violence – for the sake of their families and the country (Rodriguez, 2010). Thus, the production of idealized migrant worker subjectivities is rooted in broader racialized and gendered colonial ideologies that shape the imagination and co-constitution of Filipina women in the labour market (Polanco, 2017; Terry, 2014; Rodriguez and Schwenken, 2013; Tungohan, 2021).

While the fashioning of 'ideal' OFW subjectivities is partly driven by state agencies and processes, non-state and private sector actors and networks are also implicated in the labour

migration regime of the Philippines. For instance, private recruitment agencies are lucrative enterprises that stand to profit from the brokering of Philippine nationals as they interplay with the labour migration regime of the state (Constable, 2007; Polanco, 2017; Guevarra, 2010). These profit-driven intermediaries draw on essentialized stereotypes of Filipino workers and data about employers' preferences for workers to construct Filipino workers as a desirable labour force (Debonneville, 2021). These preferences are coded by racialized, sexualized, and gendered understandings of "Filipino-ness" as readily subservient, obedient, and flexible to employer demands and workloads – distinctions that are often articulated in relation to the assumed 'natural' qualities of racialized workers from different ethnic backgrounds (Debonneville, 2021; Polanco, 2019b; Constable, 2007). However, there are also tensions about the shifting functions of the Philippine state from primarily and explicitly *promoting* overseas labour migration (Rodriguez, 2010; Guevarra, 2010) to taking on a more *regulatory* and protective approach. This is particularly evident through the establishment of the Department of Migrant Workers in 2022, which has the explicit mandate of streamlining recruitment and deployment processes and protecting OFWs by curbing illegal recruitment and human trafficking in the fast-growing private sector. Regardless, the evolution of a highly complex state bureaucracy governing labour migration is a clear indication that the Philippines continues to actively participate in activities that endorse labour export as a key economic strategy.

Even in an institutional environment that has naturalized labour migration as an economic and social reproduction strategy, the agency of individuals who choose to migrate overseas is not diminished. Parreñas' (2011) theorization of *indentured mobility* is useful here as it recognizes migrant workers' capacity for agency and mobility even in labour migration regimes that impose "severe structural constraints" on their autonomy (p. 7). As a framework, *indentured mobility* seeks to disrupt essentialist notions of migrant victimhood by recognizing that the structural conditions that may generate a need *or* desire for labour migration does not inherently strip migrant workers of their agency. While their options may be limited and exclusionary migrant labour regimes may render them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, migrant workers have varying experiences within the "complex dynamics of coercion and choice" (Parreñas, 2011, p. 7). Thus, what becomes more problematic is the structural embeddedness of labour migration within the Philippine economy, the gendered and racialized commodification of migrant workers under neoliberal global capitalism, the inadequate protections offered to migrants working abroad, and the emotional harm that families endure because of transnational labor migration.

3.3. Temporary Foreign Worker Programs in Canada

The expansion of temporary foreign worker programs (TFWP) within Canada's migration landscape is linked to the country's historical foundations as a settler colony (Stasiulis, 2020; Walia, 2021; Sharma, 2006). In the early 1900s, the first iterations of migrant domestic worker schemes were underpinned by eugenic ideologies of white Anglo-Saxon superiority and were part of a nation-building strategy for cementing the white race in Canada (Bakan and Stasiulis, 1997). These programs sought to attract young, middle-class and European women primarily from England, Ireland, and Finland, who were viewed as having the "right national and 'racial'/ethnic stock'" for establishing Canada into another white settler colony (Stiell and England, 1997, p. 199; Bakan and Stasiulis, 1997; Hsiung and Nichol, 2010; Walia, 2021). As more white European women entered the waged labour force in the post-war era, however, the Canadian government turned to British colonies in the Caribbean to address the growing domestic labour shortage. In 1955, the federal government entered contracts with Jamaica and Barbados through the establishment of the Caribbean Domestic Scheme (CDS), which allowed unmarried, childless migrants – mostly women – to enter Canada to work as live-in domestic workers (Arat-Koç, 1997; Bakan and Stasiulis, 1997, 2005). In contrast to the treatment given to white migrant domestic workers, Caribbean migrant women could only apply for landed immigrant status after one year of work, they were paid significantly less than their European counterparts and were subjected to racist and invasive medical and gynecological testing and the threat of deportation if found to be pregnant (Arat-Koç, 1997; Hsiung and Nichol, 2010).

The restrictive and invasive criteria that Caribbean migrant workers were subjected to reveals the ways in which Canada's migrant worker programs became increasingly exclusionary when non-European workers were permitted entry into Canada (Daenzer, 1997; Thobani, 2000). With the ideological establishment of a White Eurocentric Canadian identity, the increasing presence of non-White migrants was framed as a threat to the 'national family' that needed to be managed (Walia, 2021; Sharma, 2006). As a result, Canada was subjected to international scrutiny because of their racist migration policies, which led Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson to institutionalize a 'race-blind' point system for immigration in 1967, supposedly ending preference for white European migrants and liberalizing immigration policies through 'neutral' economic language (Tungohan, 2023; Arat-Koç, 1997). With a mandate of prioritizing 'high-skilled' immigration to bolster the Canadian industrial and professional economy, the point system excluded domestic work and caregiving labour as employment categories on the basis that this

labour would attract 'unskilled' migrant workers. Furthermore, domestic labour at this point came to be associated with racialized migrant women which contributed to its low status within broader Canadian society (Bakan and Stasiulis, 1997).

The Canadian government institutionalized the Non-Immigrant Employment Authorization Program (NIEAP) in 1973 as a means of recruiting migrant workers for 'low-skilled' and 'low-status' occupations including live-in domestic labour (Marsden, 2011). Under NIEAP, domestic workers were given temporary work visas that were tied to their employers. These permits stipulated their employers, their occupation, place of residence, and length and terms of employment (Fudge and MacPhail, 2009; Hsiung and Nichol, 2010). Workers admitted under the NIEAP were only legally entitled to remain in Canada throughout the duration indicated on their contracts and were required to leave the country once their contract expired before being able to apply for a new one. Furthermore, migrant workers were disallowed from accessing social services and supports, including public healthcare and workers compensation. No pathways to permanent settlement were available under NIEAP. Immigration scholars have argued that the institutionalization of the NIEAP signalled two key shifts in Canadian immigration policies: the first is the shift from immigration for permanent settlement to immigration for temporary labour (Fudge and MacPhail, 2009); and the second is the institutionalized reliance on unfree and indentured migrant labour for work in industries that were unattractive to Canadian citizens (Stasiulis, 2020; Sharma, 2006; Walia, 2021).

3.3.1. Advocacy Efforts and The Foreign Domestic Movement, 1982

The conditions stipulated by the NIEAP fostered an environment where exploitation and abuse against temporary migrant domestic workers were prevalent. In this context, numerous organizations advocating for the rights and welfare of migrant domestic workers began to emerge across Canada (Hsiung and Nichol, 2010). As Tungohan (2023) outlines, increasing public awareness of the injustices against migrant domestic workers led workers, lawyers, and academics to organize and protest for changes that would protect the welfare of these workers. One case that galvanized the mobilization efforts was the case of 7 Jamaican mothers - Elizabeth Lodge, Carmen Hyde, Eliza Cox, Elaine Peart, Rubena Whyte, Gloria Lawrence, and Lola Anderson – who in 1978 were faced with deportation after being charged with misrepresenting their marital status and number of children to enter Canada through the CDS (Tungohan, 2023). Migrant worker organizations and their allies staged protests, circulated petitions, lobbied government officials directly, and published papers to raise awareness and pressure the government to reverse the

deportation order. The collective organizing efforts not only led to 6/7 women obtaining permanent resident status, but also served as a key "transformative event that defined the migrant care workers movement in Canada" (Tungohan, 2023, p. 46).

The activism of migrant domestic workers helped to establish pathways towards permanent settlement in Canada (Tungohan, 2023). Advocacy groups led by migrant caregivers themselves spearheaded several actions demanding structural changes to the migrant domestic worker program. This included a monumental conference of migrant caregiver organizations in Canada in May 1980, where caregiver organizations gathered in Ottawa to coordinate their lobbying efforts and activities and met with then Minister of Immigration to discuss their concerns and demands, including the importance of a PR pathway to Canada (Tungohan, 2023). Thus, the CDS was dissolved and replaced with the Foreign Domestic Movement (FDM) in 1981. In contrast to the CDS and NIEAP, the FDM granted migrant domestic workers with a pathway to apply for landed immigrant status after 24 months of continuous work as a live-in caregiver. West-Indian women and women from the Philippines comprised most non-white arrivals under the FDM, with Philippine arrivals comprising 60.2% of arrivals by 1990 (Macklin, 1992, p. 693). The creation of pathways towards PR status signified a substantial victory for domestic workers, affirming that despite their lack of permanent citizenship status, they were *already* full political subjects capable of asserting their political rights and freedoms to improve their social and material livelihoods (Tungohan, 2012, 2018).

Even so, the FDM retained many of the exploitative features of the NIEAP that fostered the vulnerability of migrant domestic workers. Under the FDM, migrant domestic workers were formally required to live in the homes of their employers to whom their work permits were bound and were not allowed to migrate with family members. The nature of employer-tied work permits also meant that employers held considerable control over their employees, and the fear of deportation meant that workers would often remain with exploitative and abusive employers (Marsden, 2011; MacPhail and Fudge, 2009). Obtaining landed immigrant status was also not guaranteed as applicants were required to fulfill several criteria to demonstrate their capacity for self-sufficiency and cultural adaptation for life in Canada, including financial resources, language fluency, and educational/occupational upgrading credentials (Arat-Koç, 1999; Wadhera, 2021). Thus, even though the FDM signified a step forward, the conditions of the FDM meant that workers were still treated as disposable and deportable (Stasiulis, 2020).

3.3.2. The Live-in Caregiver Program, 1992-2014

The Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) was introduced in 1992 to replace the FDM following government consultations and assessments driven by ongoing mobilization efforts from migrant workers and advocacy organizations demanding improvements to the program. A key change introduced through the LCP was the guaranteed pathway to PR, as all migrants under the auspices of the LCP were eligible to receive an open work permit upon completing the program and eventually, permanent resident status. However, the LCP retained several restrictive elements from its predecessor. For one, LCP caregivers were still required to live in the homes of their employers and were also disallowed from migrating with family members. Until they obtained PR, migrant caregivers had temporary and conditional status tied to their continuous employment with a single employer, which not only increased their dependency on their employers but also enabled high levels of employer control (Tungohan et al., 2015; Drolet, 2016). This included working excessive hours without overtime pay, being perpetually on-call, as well as payment below minimum wage (Drolet, 2016; Hanley et al., 2017). Furthermore, caregivers were not allowed to seek employment outside of care work, nor could they attend training and/or education programs longer than six months (Atanackovic and Bourgeault, 2014; Torres et al., 2014; Hanley et al., 2017).

From 2005-2014, an average of 31,859 total caregiver permits were issued per year, with an average of 5,540 LCP caregivers obtaining permanent resident status each year (Drolet, 2016). Despite a guaranteed pathway to PR, the transition from live-in caregiver to permanent residency was often expensive and long, with application processing times averaging four years and worsening over time, leading to a backlog of PR applications as high as 68,000 in May 2014 (Hanley et al., 2017; Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada, 2018). At its peak, processing times were as long as 60 months; at its best, processing times were up to 12 months long (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2019). For those arriving under the LCP from 2006-2010, for instance, only 0.9% of caregiver immigrants transitioned into permanent resident status in the second year after they were first issued their open work permit, with 55.6% transitioning by the fifth year (Lu and Hou, 2024). This meant that family separation was often stretched out for long periods of time – an average of 6 to 8 years – and without a determined end date (Drolet, 2016). The emotional trauma of long-term family separation and dislocation results in complex emotional and socio-economic consequences that reverberate over time, including emotionally fraught bonds between mothers and their children upon reunification in Canada (Pratt, 2012).

Women from the Philippines comprised most arrivals under the LCP, accounting for almost 90% of all arrivals throughout the program's lifetime between 1992-2014 (Kelly et al., 2011; Lightman et al., 2021). The GATES study found that LCP caregivers were 34 years of age on average, and about two-thirds reported having children (GATES, 2014). The report also demonstrated that LCP caregivers possessed high levels of human capital, with 84% possessing a university education or higher (GATES, 2014). Most women who arrived were employed in the Philippines prior to their arrival in Canada and commonly worked in teaching, nursing, or administration occupations (Banerjee et al., 2017). Many also followed a stepwise migration to Canada having worked in a third country prior to their arrival in Canada, with Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore reported as the most common countries of residence (Banerjee et al., 2017).

3.3.3. Post-LCP Pilot Program Pathways

Since 2014, the federal government removed the mandatory live-in requirement, and the LCP has since been replaced by a series of 5-year pilot pathway programs. In 2014, this included the Caring for Children and People stream and Caring for People with High Medical Needs stream. Although the removal of the live-in requirement was celebrated by migrant caregivers and advocates as a measure for mitigating instances of abuse and reducing long-term family separation (Wadehra, 2021; Tungohan, 2023), many other requirements were introduced that made the program increasingly restrictive. For one, the educational and language requirements were increased, requiring the equivalent of at least one-year of post-secondary education and a CLB Level 5 competency in English or French, adding to caregivers' mental and financial burdens (Wadhera, 2021). Furthermore, obtaining permanent residency was no longer guaranteed even if a caregiver were to successfully complete the requirements of the program, as the new pathways are capped at 2,750 PR applications per stream, per year. The system of employer-tied work permits also remained under the new pilot programs, and although it was no longer mandatory, living outside of their employers' home was not always a choice migrant caregivers could make due to the high costs of living and the low wages they were paid.

The pilot program system continued in 2019 with another set of 5-year programs, the Home Child Care Provider and Home Support Worker streams. These programs retained the narrower application criteria and the cap on the number of PR applications, but offered occupational work permits rather than employer-specific permits to enable caregivers to change employers more easily. When the Home Child Care Provider and Home Support Worker streams ended in 2024, the Government of Canada announced a new set of 5-year pilot programs that would grant caregivers

permanent resident status on arrival. Although these pilot programs offer welcomed improvements compared to the prior structure of the LCP, the set limits on PR applications combined with the increasingly restrictive criteria has contributed to the narrowing of PR opportunities for caregiver migrants in Canada, from 26,000 admissions in 2015 to only 3,425 in 2024 (Open Canada, 2024) (Figure 5).

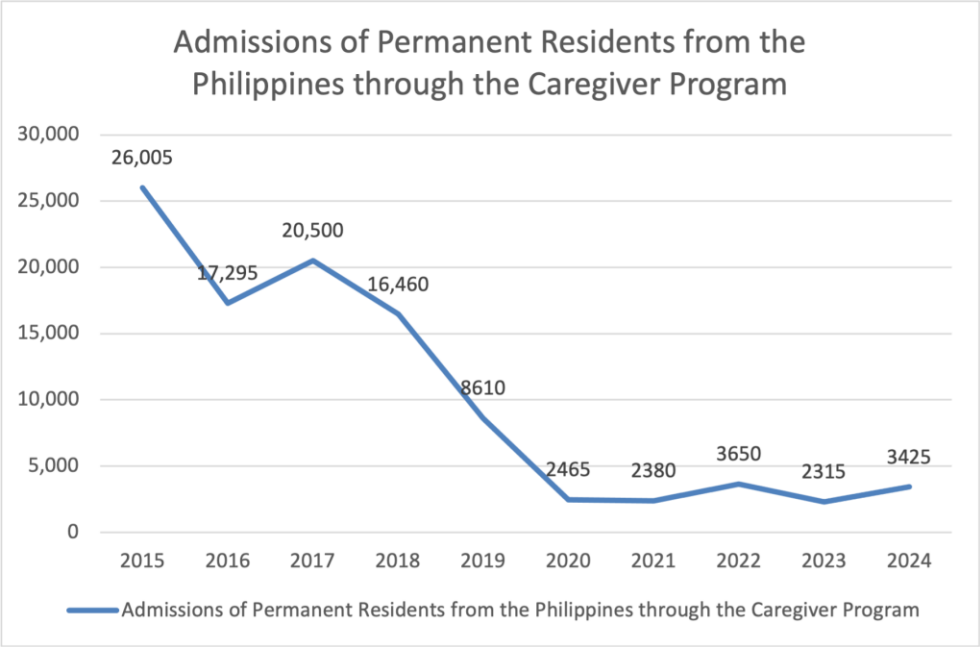


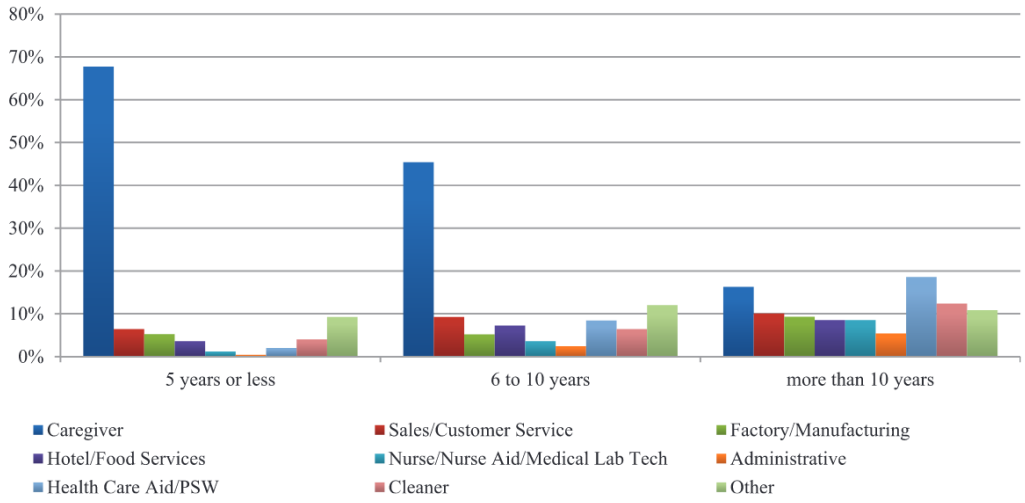
Figure 5. PR admissions from the Philippines through the Caregiver Program, 2015-2024. Graph by author.

3.3. Post-caregiver program labour market outcomes

Despite the multitude of changes since, the lived realities of the LCP continue to persist. The isolating living and working conditions that live-in caregivers experienced combined with the devaluation of care work as legitimate and skilled labour shaped the challenges that they encountered when integrating into the post-LCP labour market (Lightman et al., 2021). While most live-in caregivers eventually transition out of caregiver occupations, a high proportion often remain in a narrow set of low-wage, "low-skilled" occupations, a process that Pratt (199) describes as "deskilling through immigration, followed by ghettoisation within marginal occupations and low monetary returns on educational investments" (p. 216). The GATES study found that the most common occupational categories amongst former live-in caregivers after 10 years or more in Canada include health care aides/PSWs; cleaners; hospitality/customer service, manufacturing (Banerjee et al., 2018, p. 919). Interestingly, the GATES project also found that the number of LCP-

caregivers in the healthcare aid/PSW sector increased the longer one spent in Canada, jumping from 2% to 18.6% over the course of 10 years or longer in Canada (Figure 6). And even though the number of former LCP caregivers in caregiving occupations decreased over time, caregiving remained one of the most prominent employment categories (Tungohan et al., 2015, Banerjee et al., 2018).

Figure 3. Filipina LCP Immigrants' Occupations by Years in Canada



Source: Data from the Gabriela Transitions Experiences Survey of LCP immigrants in Canada.
Notes: To match labels in the key to their respective bars in the graph, follow label names from left to right.

Figure 6. Filipina LCP Immigrants' Occupations by Years in Canada (Source: Banerjee et al., 2018, p. 919).

Although obtaining an open work permit meant caregivers were closer to obtaining permanent resident status and family reunification, "this also, paradoxically, magnified their financial insecurity" as they now had to accrue the financial resources to support themselves, fulfill their social reproduction obligations in the Philippines, while also preparing for their family's eventual arrival in Canada (Tungohan et al., 2015, p. 96). Restrictions on caregivers' ability to pursue education and training programs longer than 6-months hindered their ability to transition out of care work and into a career that aligned with their professional or educational backgrounds (Atanackovich and Bourgeault, 2014). Pursuing upgrading courses or having credentials assessed is also a time-consuming and expensive process, and many chose to delay these processes to prioritize saving for family reunification (Drolet, 2016). Caregivers were also unable to avail government-funded supports and public services until they completed the program and obtained permanent resident status. Even when they could legally access institutional supports, such as education assistance loans, these resources often channelled them into high demand yet low-

waged occupations (Torres et al., 2012). Some women chose to remain in care work even after obtaining an open work permit as it provided them with a "steady and stable" source of income while they prepared for their family's arrival (Tungohan et al., 2015; Banerjee et al., 2018). Challenges related to transitioning out of caregiving can also be linked to the fact that many do so in the later stages of life, when "retraining and flexibility are far more difficult" (Kelly et al., 2011, p. 8).

The institutional and social challenges of transitioning out of live-in caregiving work were also compounded by intersectional structures of differentiation in the labour market along the lines of race, gender, and class (Lightman et al., 2021; Torres et al., 2012). For instance, women in the GATES study reported that stigmatization of caregiving combined with their gendered and racialized identities that construct Filipinas as 'natural' caregivers locks them into these roles (Banerjee et al., 2018, p. 927). Here, essentialized notions of Filipina identity played a role in how employment counsellors, agencies, and employers assessed their aptitudes for certain careers, discouraging them from pursuing occupations that were assumed to be 'unsuitable' for Filipina caregivers. This had the effect of preventing LCP migrants from exiting care work despite having professional experience or educational training in other occupational sectors, which significantly impacted their material outcomes. Quantitative analysis has revealed that despite Filipina LCP migrants' high levels of human capital upon migration to Canada, they generally experience lower employment earnings trajectories compared to those who immigrate through other economic immigration pathways (Banerjee et al., 2018; Lightman et al., 2021). The channeling of caregiver migrants into low-wage occupations is a phenomenon Lightman et al. (2021) describe as an "intersectional penalty pathway", which suggests the negative, enduring ramifications of migration through a caregiver program are compounded by discriminatory processes of racialization and feminization in the labour market to produce poor socio-economic/material outcomes. Taken together, processes of deskilling and deprofessionalization amongst live-in caregivers are therefore directly linked to the structural aspects of Canada's caregiver programs that mandate long-term family separation and prohibit educational/occupational mobility (Tungohan et al., 2015; Banerjee et al., 2018; Lightman et al., 2021; Polanco, 2019; Torres et al., 2012).

3.3.1. The PSW regulatory landscapes

Personal support work is not regulated in Ontario nor are education and training requirements standardized by the province (Laporte et al., 2020; Kelly and Bourgeault, 2015). The lack of a provincial PSW registry, the fact that national statistics group PSWs in sector-based

National Occupational Classification (NOC) codes[2], as well as the spatial dispersion of their workplaces present challenges to capturing the totality of the PSW workforce along multiple scales (Pinto et al., 2022; Laporte et al., 2020; Kralj et al., 2022, 2022b). An official count is also complicated by the fact that many workers may hold multiple jobs across and within sectors, suggesting that official estimates may be skewed upwards (Kralj et al., 2022). Nevertheless, Zagrodney (2022) found that the majority of PSWs are employed in LTC settings (34.5%), followed by HC (32.9%), and hospitals (17.4%). With some variability across sectors, the same report found women represented 66-88% of the workforce.

To become a certified PSW, candidates can choose from a variety of training programs offered by private career colleges (PCCs), community colleges (CC)s, or school boards that align with the Personal Support Worker Standard established by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (Kelly and Bourgeault, 2015). The standards are comprised of vocational learning outcomes, employability skills, and a general education requirement (Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities, 2022) and function as a guideline for developing curriculum "that can fit into a variety of course delivery mechanisms" rather than a "firm curriculum" (Kelly, 2017, p. 1432). Whereas students enrolled at a CC are certified once they complete the program and obtain their diploma, students at PCCs must take the National Association of Career Colleges (NACC) PSW exam to successfully graduate (NACC, nd). PCCs and CCs tend to be the most common route for prospective PSWs, although PCC pathways may be more attractive due to affordable tuitions rates, shorter program durations, and flexible course delivery formats and schedules.

The complex education and training landscapes means that there are often inconsistencies and variability in PSW training (Kelly and Bourgeault, 2015). PSWs are also not licensed by a self-governing regulatory body that grants credentials based on a standardized set of skills, knowledge, and standards of practice that members of the profession are required to follow (Marani et al., 2021). The specific acts and tasks PSWs are allowed to perform are specified in provincial and/or territorial legislation (Laporte et al., 2020). In Ontario, this includes the Long-Term Care Homes Act (2007), and controlled acts defined by the Regulated Health Professions Act (1991) that may be

[2] The National Occupational Classification (NOC) system records statistics about the PSW labour market based on the sector. NOC 41101 (Home support workers, caregivers and related occupations) accounts for PSWs worker in home and community settings while NOC 33102 (nurse aides, orderlies and patient service associates) accounts for PSWs in institutional settings, including hospitals, assisted living facilities, and nursing homes, as well as NOC 33109 (other assisting occupations in support of health services), which also includes professions unrelated to PSW roles. Due to these variations, it is challenging to calculate an accurate total of the PSW workforce.

performed under the delegation of, or supervision from, a regulated health professional, such as a nurse or a doctor (Sethna, 2013). In 2021, the provincial government enshrined the Health and Supportive Care Providers Oversight Authority (HSCPOA) Act with the mandate of standardizing and strengthening "health human resources oversight by ensuring quality care, consistency of education and training of PSWs and transparency for the public regarding the PSW workforce" (HSCPOA Act, 2024). The HSCPOA is an attempt to standardize PSW education and training across the province by functioning as an 'oversight body' and a provincial registry, as PSWs are required to fulfill certain educational and experience requirements[3] before they could self-register themselves. However, registration is voluntary to "avoid any unintended consequences or disruptions on the health care system and the PSW supply" (HSCPOA, 2024). While the HSCPOA Act website indicates that PSWs associations, educators, employers, and PSWs themselves desire increased regulation, it remains to be seen how effectively the HSCPOA Act can encourage registration and improve the quality of education, training, and work conditions for PSWs.

3.3.2. The precarity of PSW labour

While the challenges and needs of the PSW workforce might vary across different sectors, the industry can generally be characterized as experiencing a crisis of care linked to the interlocking and structural effects of privatization (Armstrong et al., 2020; Molinari and Pratt, 2021), the impacts of healthcare austerity measures (Gawhi and Walton-Roberts, 2022), and the increasing casualization and flexibilization of work (Kelly, 2017). The lack of regulation and standardization contributes to the devaluation of PSW work as 'semi-skilled' and reinforces their position at the bottom of the healthcare occupations hierarchy (Marani et al., 2021). Furthermore, this work is characterized by multiple dimensions of employment precarity and casualization (Vosko, 2006; Ontario Health Coalition, 2020). PSWs typically earn the lowest hourly wages of all healthcare-related occupations, ranging from $17-25/hr in home care setting (Canada Job Bank, 2024a), and $18-27.30/hr in institutional settings (Canada Job Bank, 2024b). Because full-time permanent positions are scarce, it is common for PSWS to take on several part-time or casual

[3] The HSCPOA has 4 pathways to becoming a registered PSW. The first pathway is by obtaining a PSW certificate from an institution that aligns with the requirements of the Ontario Ministry of Colleges OR a through the completion of a PSW program at an Ontario District School Board, Private Career College, College of Applied Arts and Technology, or Indigenous Institution, on or after July 1, 2014. The second pathway entails three years of employment as a PSW or at least 600 hours of employment. The third pathway is through current registration in a PSW registry in other Canadian jurisdictions. The fourth pathway is through a competency assessment.

positions across sectors – for instance, holding a part-time position at a LTC facility while also finding casual work through a home care agency – to survive financially (Saks and Zagrodney, 2020; Armstong et al., 2020; Pinto et al., 2022; Tungohan, 2020). Due to poor working conditions and poor wages, the PSW workforce is also characterized by issues of retention and recruitment, resulting in substantial labour shortages. In fact, a Freedom of Information request by The Canadian Press revealed provincial documents indicating that Ontario will need 50,853 more PSWs by 2032 to meet the needs of Ontario's aging population (Jones, 2024).

Guided by principles of privatization, austerity, and rationalization, healthcare provision in Ontario has widely shifted from the public sphere to the private sphere of the home and the capitalist market (England, 2010; Lynch, 2022; Federici, 2012; Fraser, 2016; Armstrong et al., 2019). In this context, "the relational and context-specific nature of caring" is eroded and reduced to a set of discrete tasks that should be optimized for efficiencies (Dyer et al., 2008, p. 2032). These issues are particularly acute in the LTC sector. A 2020 report by the Ontario Health Coalition emphasized chronic understaffing across institutional settings like long-term care homes, where "working short" – often one to two PSWs short per shift – has become the norm despite increasing care acuity amongst residents and patients (Ontario Health Coalition, 2020, p. 9). Furthermore, the report found that it was common for LTC homes to be short 5-10 staff members at any given 24-hour period (Ontario Health Coalition, 2020, p. 9). For example, PSWs might be required to bathe a resident in 15 minutes, which is unreasonable given the amount of care involved; as Rubinstein (2020) aptly describes, "That's 15 minutes to undress an elderly woman or man, help them into a mechanical lift, lower them into a bath, clean them while respecting their modesty and dignity, and then help them get out, dry off and get dressed, and then sanitize the tub for the next bath".

3.3.3. PSW work in the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the precarious nature of PSW work characterized by job insecurity, inadequate compensation, unsafe working conditions, and a lack of administrative support (Armstrong et al., 2020; Pinto et al., 2022; Marani et al., 2021; Hopwood et al., 2022 Molinari and Pratt, 2021; Gawhi et al., 2022). For instance, many PSWs experienced a reduction in work hours due to a provincial emergency measure limiting LTC staff to work at only one facility to minimize community spread, which resulted in a substantial loss of income for PSWs across all sectors (Grant and Anderssen, 2020; Hopwood et al., 2022). This measure discursively blamed PSWs for the spread of COVID-19 across LTC facilities (Tungohan, 2020) while obscuring the fact that chronic staffing shortages and increasing care acuity were ongoing issues even prior to the

onset of the pandemic (Ontario Health Coalition, 2020). Many institutional settings and LTC facilities lacked adequate supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect staff and residents from infection, which contributed to unsafe working *and* caring conditions and resulted in high levels of mental and emotional exhaustion over fears of contracting or spreading the virus to co-workers, residents, and family members (Keung & Miller, 2020; Fenn, 2020; Knope, 2020; Pinto et al., 2020). These systemic vulnerabilities were also compounded by issues of gender, race, and citizenship, as a large majority of the PSW labour force is predominantly composed of older racialized immigrant women (Estabrooks and Keefe, 2020; Sethi, 2020; Good Gingrich & Mitchell, 2020).

While there are some sector-based variabilities, the segmentation of racialized migrant women into PSW occupations is prominent across Canada's Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs). Demographically, Afro-Caribbean and Filipino immigrants each account for 30% of the immigrant workers in the PSW industry (Turcotte and Savage, 2020). In the case of Filipino immigrants, recent studies suggest that migration to Canada through a temporary foreign caregiver program like the LCP is a crucial mechanism that contributes to their segmentation in caregiving roles like PSW employment (Tungohan et al., 2015; Banerjee et al., 2018, Lightman et al., 2021). While existing scholarship about the post-caregiver program transitions of Filipina women helps to explain some of the circumstances that channel Filipina caregiver migrants into low-wage occupational categories, more qualitative detail is necessary to understand the particularities of labour market segmentation into PSW roles.

3.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined the historical and contemporary context necessary to understand patterns of labour market segmentation amongst Filipina former caregivers in Canada. I began by discussing the expansion of labour export policy in the Philippines as driven by neoliberal logics and underpinned by the legacies of American imperialism. Drawing from feminist migration scholars such as Geraldina Polanco (2017, 2019), Ethel Tungohan (2021), Anna Romina Guevarra (2010) and Robyn Rodriguez (2010), I illustrated the discursive and gendered production of OFWs as "ideal" migrant workers through various state and non-state mechanisms. Following this, I provided a chronology of temporary foreign caregiver programs in Canada, calling attention to the role of community advocacy and activism in changing the policy landscape around temporary foreign caregiver program. I also focused specifically on the LCP given the significant

number of Filipina arrivals through this stream throughout the duration of the program. I discussed existing literature about the post-caregiver program labour market transitions that Filipina women make and homed in on research that has pointed to a pathway towards PSW labour. I ended the chapter by discussing the PSW industry in Ontario. The following chapters will delve into my empirical findings.

Chapter 4 – From live-in caregiver to open-work permit holder: negotiating labour market decisions at the point of transition

4.1. Introduction

Existing scholarship about the post-regularization labour market experiences of temporary foreign workers has demonstrated that transitioning into more secure legal status categories does not guarantee less-precarious employment (Goldring and Landolt, 2011). Rather, migrating with precarious legal status can lead to long-term job precarity and economic marginalization (Anderson, 2010; Lewis et al., 2015; Goldring and Landolt, 2011, 2013). In the context of Filipina caregiver immigrants' post-regularization experiences, recent studies have found that caregiving remains a prominent occupational outcome long after caregivers obtain PR (Tungohan et al., 2015; Banerjee et al., 2018; Lightman et al., 2021; Kelly et al., 2012). Scholars have called for additional nuance to better understand the occupations that live-in caregiver immigrants transition into and the ways in which their experiences of differential inclusion led to discrimination, marginalization, and/or deskilling in the labour market (Tungohan et al., 2015; Banerjee et al., 2017, 2018)

In this first empirical chapter, I contribute to existing discussions by exploring the experiences of the Filipina caregiver immigrants I interviewed who later ended up in PSW work, focusing on their personal decision-making processes, personal aspirations, and family circumstances at the point of transitioning out of the caregiver program. I will begin by discussing the social and economic considerations that led caregivers to remain in caregiving occupations after obtaining an OWP. The proceeding section will explore the familial attachments that might develop between caregivers and their employer-sponsors, elucidating the ways in which 'fictive kin' dynamics (Dodson and Zincavage, 2007) might influence caregivers' decision to continue their caregiving employment. Lastly, this chapter discusses the interlocking social, institutional, temporal, and financial considerations related to one's choice to exit caregiving, and the ways in which women negotiate their ambitions within the broader context of their differential inclusion into Canada.

4.2. Economic negotiations for 'staying home'

Although obtaining an OWP legally expanded caregiver immigrants' mobility in the labour market, many of the women I interviewed described feeling more inclined to look for a 'survival job'

that was fast and easy to obtain rather than one that aligned with their interests or prior educational/professional backgrounds. Pursuing a survival job enabled them to begin accumulating the financial resources to facilitate family reunification processes while also ensuring their own survival in Canada as they transitioned out of the caregiver program and into the open Canadian labour market. This was summarized in the following reflections from Julia, a community organizer working for a settlement organization and advocacy group for migrant workers. Julia is a Filipina woman herself with over 10 years of experience supporting caregivers transitioning out of a caregiver program. She was actively engaged in migrant worker advocacy efforts across the GTA and in Canada, lobbying the federal government for changes to be made to the LCP and raising awareness about the exploitation and abuse live-in caregivers experienced. She said:

> ...the priorities is different; 'I want an easy money,' you know, 'easy job that I can be in.' Or, 'maybe my family will be with me too,' or 'they can get this job also in the factory because it's easy, there's no interview,' you know, 'all they need is people to work willingly.' And then that's all the priorities that they have in their mind, they're not looking into a career that is rewarding outside of caregiving because, if you have a family of four coming in, you need to survive also. And they need an apartment. They need, you know, they need to sustain the family. If the children are still going to school, they need to buy a lot of stuff coming in. And the only priorities they have is an easy job and easy money. (Interview, 'Julia', community worker and former caregiver, Toronto, 2023).

The social and financial pressure of settling into their new lives as permanent residents in Canada and making the necessary preparations for family reunification were compounded by their ongoing financial obligations to support family members in the Philippines:

> Also, they're sending money to the Philippines, not only to their immediate families but to other family or extended family members who needed help when it comes to their medical needs, you know, things like that. (Interview, 'Julia', community worker and former caregiver, Toronto, 2023).

Given this context, remaining in care work in the immediate period after obtaining an OWP – whether it be with one's caregiver employer or through the help of an employment agency – was described as a strategy towards relative economic stability. Amongst the caregiver immigrants I interviewed for this research, seven retained some form of caregiving employment upon completing the caregiver program. Julia later discussed how continuing live-in caregiving employment with one's caregiver program sponsor was sometimes the preferred choice because it minimized the economic costs related to settlement and family reunification, such as rent. Even

with the removal of the mandatory live-in requirement in 2014, she discussed how live-in arrangements continued out of economic necessity:

> ...majority of them still choose to live with the employer because you see how much the rent is right now in Toronto, so the affordability of housing is not, it's something that caregivers would like to avoid because they're trying to save money to bring their families here. (Interview, 'Julia', community worker and former caregiver, Toronto, 2023).

Thus, continuing one's live-in employment was a way for caregivers to re-allocate rent costs to other expenses – not just those associated with family reunification, but also to costs necessary for their own reproduction in Canada. This sentiment was summarized succinctly by Claire, a 32-year-old woman from Pangasinan who migrated to Canada through the Home Childcare Provider Pilot Pathway in 2019, leaving her 8-year-old daughter behind in the Philippines. Before migrating to Canada as a live-in caregiver, Claire worked in hotel management for 10 years. Although she made a decent living in the Philippines and was sad about having to sell some of her properties and personal belongings to migrate to Canada, she was compelled to do so to secure a brighter future for her daughter in Canada as "the land of opportunities". She obtained PR in 2022 and was in the process of sponsoring her daughter's migration to Canada by early 2024. At the time of our interview, she was still employed on a live-in basis with her caregiver sponsor in Richmond Hill while also working part-time as a server at a hotel *and* pursuing her PSW certification on a hybrid, part-time basis. In the following quote, she described the benefits of continuing her live-in caregiving employment:

> When I'm a very full-time caregiver, my cost of living is, you know, I can save, I have free food. So that's the benefit of being a caregiver. Once you have the open work permit and you have these other jobs, that's when you're gonna be like spending for food, spending for transportation. So, the benefit of being caregiver, a live-in caregiver, you can save when you are during that live-in period. (Interview, 'Claire', PSW-in-training, Toronto, 2023).

Some of the women I spoke with described how live-in caregiving employment proved to be more financially viable compared to other 'survival jobs' in customer service or food services sectors. This was particularly the case for Goldie. Goldie migrated to Canada under the LCP from Cagayan Valley in 2005 at the age of 26, leaving behind her kids – the youngest being 3-months old. Prior to leaving the Philippines, she worked as a professional in the marketing and tourism industry while her now ex-husband was employed overseas as an engineer in Saudi Arabia. Her sister-in-law had been living and working as a caregiver in Canada and helped her apply to the LCP and find an employer in Toronto. At the time of our interview, Goldie had been employed as a PSW for five years

and was still employed by her LCP sponsor, working as their housekeeper and cleaner on a casual basis in between her PSW shifts. Before Goldie began the process of family reunification, her main priority after obtaining an OWP was to accrue enough funds to secure an apartment of her own. During this time, she did not consider seeking out settlement services or supports from community organizations as she was solely focused on earning enough money as fast as she could to secure an apartment:

> I just work and work and work. When I got open permit, I worked more than 2 jobs. 'Cause at that time I had to work more, 'cause I had to get my apartment. And in order for you to have an apartment you have to slap them with your income. (Interview, 'Goldie', HC and LTC PSW, Grimsby, 2023).

She recounted to me how her LCP sponsors treated her well and paid her $6 more than the hourly wage at the time, which incentivized her to continue her employment with them while seeking out additional sources of income:

> A couple that they are doctors, hired me to take care of their kids. And, I started pretty good offer with them at that time. The minimum wage at that time was $10 but they gave me $16 right away. So it's pretty well off *laughs* and until now I'm still working with them just to clean up their house. (Interview, 'Goldie,' LTC and HC PSW, Grimsby (formerly Toronto), 2023).

She discussed how her wages as a live-in caregiver were higher than what she was being paid in other roles, such as her customer service position at a Loblaws grocery store:

> I applied at Loblaws while I was working as a live-in caregiver still, but I was waiting for my kids to come over. I work at Loblaws as a customer service and I work in there for 6 years realizing that actually, Loblaws is a minimum [wage] pay, and caregiver pays better. If you are into your employer's house, they offer you to eat food like what they eat, what they bought from the grocery; you don't need to spend. So, I realized that actually, it's harder to work outside than being a caregiver, economically speaking. But I would just say is that I'm very fortunate because the people that I was working are good people. (Interview, 'Goldie', HC and LTC PSW, Grimsby, 2023).

Lynn similarly viewed her decision to continue her live-in employment with her FDM sponsor as an economical choice. Originally from Burawen, Leyte, Lynn immigrated to Canada through the FDM in 1990 when she was 30 years old after working as a live-in caregiver in Greece. She was employed as an accountant in the Philippines, but because the wages she earned were equivalent to $0.50 CAD a day, she felt that working abroad was the best way to achieve upward mobility. Compared to Greece, Canada seemed to offer "greener pastures", and she viewed the FDM as the easiest migration pathway to facilitate her settlement in Canada. As a live-in caregiver

in Canada, Lynn was responsible for looking after her employer's three-month old baby. When Lynn completed the FDM and obtained PR, she nevertheless viewed her continued employment with her FDM sponsor as the most financially viable option despite being free to seek out non-caregiving roles. It was during this time that she began her PSW certification:

> I still stayed with my employer, right. I was still working for them, it's just, it's because of the money I get from them, right. Like, I did not plan of moving to a different work at that time because they paid me well, but in between I went to school for PSW … So, like even if I was already having my citizenship card, I did not aim of working outside. Because the pay I get from my employer as a caregiver was good enough, better than if I work at like Walmart or any other establishment. So, I stayed there. (Interview, 'Lynn', HC PSW, Toronto, 2023).

Unlike Goldie, however, Lynn's financial security from this arrangement was dependent on working overtime hours – upwards of 11 hours a day, illustrating how viability is also dependent on employers:

> When I started, it was 11 hours [a day] right. When the kids were really young, they were babies, I worked 11 hours a day for five days. That's why I was paid well. And then, when they were older, it was just, let's say, 8 hours, 40 hours in a week. It depends on their needs, like when they were babies I was needed longer hours. As they grow older, it was just like 43 hours a week, something like that. ('Interview, 'Lynn', HC PSW, Toronto, 2023).

Even for those who did not remain employed with their caregiver program sponsor, they chose to pursue caregiving roles after obtaining an OWP because it represented a secure and available source of employment, which was especially important for accruing the financial resources to facilitate their family's settlement in Canada. For instance, Lynn's point about not planning to move out of care work after completing the FDM resonated with Maris' job search after completing the LCP. Maris migrated to Canada through the LCP in 1993 when she was 30 years old after working as a live-in caregiver in Greece for three years. She was originally a teacher and a small-business owner in Burawen, Leyte, but chose to work abroad as a caregiver in order to "[find] milk and honey" outside of the Philippines. After completing the LCP in 1996, she went back to the Philippines to marry her long-time partner and sponsor his migration to Canada. Although her LCP sponsor offered to continue her employment as a live-in caregiver, Maris decided to decline after learning she was pregnant. Instead, she chose to prioritize finding an apartment to prepare for the birth of her children. Upon leaving her LCP sponsor, she tried to find part-time employment in restaurants and food services, but when this did not work out, she returned to the care work sector:

> Right after I'm done with my caregiver program when I had my landed, then I got married, and I had my kids. So, after that I just been having some part-time job. I think I started part-time job when my kids were about two years old, before they were three years old, I started

> working. First, I went to work in a restaurant, in the kitchen with the Chinese lady for two months. It didn't work out. And then I was looking for something as a babysitter again because that was the, like, I didn't even think of working in another kind of line of work but in a caregiving. So, I was applying for an agency and I was able to find a work in Forest Hill for two kids. (Interview, 'Maris', LTC PSW, Toronto, 2023).

Wanting to expand her horizons, she supplemented her care work income by pursuing a license in investments and insurance to work as a freelance financial advisor. Her primary employment, however, remained her work as a part-time caregiver, for which she was paid under-the-table and in cash. When asked if there were other sectors she wanted to pursue, Maris recounted how her priority after completing the LCP was mainly on childrearing, not career development, so she did not strive to pursue alternative careers. Reflecting on her decisions, she discussed how caregiving, albeit part-time and paid under-the-table, contributed to her household income and allowed her to fulfill her household responsibilities around childcare.

> NP: Were there any other job sectors you wanted to pursue, but didn't?
>
> M: Not really. That really didn't come into my mind. I wanted to go into banking because I had my license already in insurance and investment, but I think I didn't trust myself so much and then I was like focusing, with my husband and me's relationship, my focus was with the kids. His focus was earning money. My focus was if I could help out financially in a bit then that was fine, but the focus was on my kids. (Interview, 'Maris', LTC PSW, Toronto, 2023).

Although Maris' drive to do whatever it took to provide for her growing family was evident in her choice to become a licensed financial advisor while balancing her social reproduction responsibilities and her caregiving employment, she held this in tension with the fact that she did not trust herself enough to make the complete shift away from care work.

The pressure to make ends meet continued to be a key factor in her future labour market decisions over time, and the opportunities she pursued were linked to what she thought were in the best interests of her family. For instance, as her children grew older and required less supervision, she set a goal to pursue a career as a registered practical nurse (RPN). However, her financial anxieties around affording education for herself *and* her children prompted her to sacrifice this goal so her kids could pursue post-secondary education under better financial circumstances. She instead chose to become a certified PSW as a means of upgrading herself while also leaving the door open for becoming an RPN. Ultimately, despite the financial stability afforded by her work as PSW, she decided to forego her aspirations of becoming an RPN:

> Actually, I wanted to study RPN. Nursing. That's what really my goal. But I said, I will start first with the PSW and then I can branch out into RPN. But when I was already working and managing here at home and then I was focusing I said, 'Oh my god, there will be two students who will be in university I will be competing with all the expenses and stuff.' Even my husband was encouraging me, 'go go go do your RPN!' But I did not pursue. I was already happy. I was already earning. Although I wasn't full-time, I was already getting enough shifts and it was already a big help to my husband. But it was one of my… before I retire, I could at least be a registered nurse rather than PSW. That was my goal. (Interview, 'Maris', LTC PSW, Toronto, 2023)

On the surface, the women's choice to remain in caregiving occupations might display an economic logic to their labour market decisions. However, their experiences as migrant caregivers – marked by the live-in requirement, family separation, precarious wages, *and* their aspirations for their families – reveal the multiple ways in which their occupational mobility is textured by their experiences of differential inclusion. Their stories also call attention to the embeddedness of labour markets within dynamics of social reproduction (Meehan and Strauss, 2015; Oberhauser, 2018), as they articulate their labour market decisions in relation to securing a better and brighter future for their children in Canada.

4.3. Familial attachments to employers

I found that the bonds and attachments between caregivers and their employers were important dimensions that also shaped the decision to remain in caregiving. For instance, Lynn described how her emotional attachments to the children in her care incentivized her to continue her caregiving employment with her FDM sponsor. At the time of our interview, she had been employed with them for over 30 years: "Because I been there for a long time, something like I been attached to the family and the kids, plus they pay me well. That was my point." (Interview, 'Lynn', HC PSW, Toronto, 2023). Lynn's sentiments mirrored Gabrielle's reflections on her decision to remain with her LCP employer. Gabrielle migrated to Canada under the LCP in 2013 when she was 35 years old after working as a live-in caregiver in Israel for two years. Originally from Mindanao and employed as an executive secretary for the Asian Development Bank in Manila, she left behind her spouse and her two infant sons in the Philippines to work abroad. Upon completing the LCP, she continued her employment with her LCP sponsor as their house cleaner. She described her reasoning through the lens of a mutually beneficial relationship built on trust, rather than a formal, waged labour employment relationship. Nevertheless, she appreciated the flexibility of this casual employment as it enabled her to attend to her childcare responsibilities while sustaining a source

of income. Gabrielle's employment with her LCP sponsor remained an aspect of her economic livelihood even after she obtained her PSW certificate and found full-time employment at a hospital:

> "Because I've been with them for a long time, and they don't want to look for new people. Like, they give you the keys, everything. Yeah, I think because of the trust, so I can go there [her employer's house] anytime I'm available … So, if I'm working the night, evening [at the hospital], so I have to work first in the morning and go there [her employer's house] during the day … It's so nice." (Interview, 'Gabrielle', Hospital PSW, Toronto, 2023).

Gabrielle's point about the flexibility of working for her LCP sponsor related to Goldie's and Lynn's rationales for continuing their employment with their caregiver sponsors, indicate how a reliable source of income was afforded to them through mutual relations of trust and loyalty. The following excerpt from Julia called attention to the employers' perspective, reflecting on the incentives they might have to accommodate a caregiver's other social reproduction and economic responsibilities, if doing so allowed them to maintain the emotional bonds between the caregiver and the employers' children:

> A lot of employers, they want to keep their caregivers because they don't want that, because their children grew up with them, you know? And then they create some kind of schedule, maybe 'two days you can be a caregiver for me. And then you can work in the factory'. And yeah, so they [employers] want it. (Interview, 'Julia', community organizer and worker, GTA, 2023).

Laura, a community worker and former live-in caregiver employed as a manager at a private immigration and settlement consulting company in the GTA, was enthusiastic as she described the 'generosity' of employers who retained the caregiver they employed. In the following excerpt, she acknowledged how choosing to remain with one's employer was a 'smart' choice given the high costs of living. She also described this as a reflection of the 'harmonious' and 'familial' relationship between caregivers and their employers. Laura used the example of employers hiring the family members of caregivers once they arrive in Canada to provide other services for their family. She believed these employment arrangements were indicative of an employer's goodwill, and a gesture meant to enable a caregivers' ability to build their financial resources:

> Some of the caregivers stay in their employers' [house]. They keep them. Other employers let the family of their caregiver live in the basement. Look how wonderful it is. They treat them like their second family. Some of them give them some car for their husbands and become the family driver. And yeah, but other caregivers choose to study. Other caregivers choose to go out of being caregiver and go employed in groceries, go employed in medical in dental, in dental office. Yes, but most stays in their employer. And then what we learn is because of the high prices of rent, when they rent, they will spend 2,500 plus for their rent.

> So, it's going to be a paycheck for the whole month of their husband. So, yeah, that's what they think. So, they're so smart. And because of the *harmonious* relationship between the employer and the employee that they build throughout the years, I think that what makes them become one family. They treat their employees, their caregivers to become one, become a member of their family.
>
> So that way, the employer, one of the employers said to the caregiver, to give you a good start, to have you to have some, to give you time to have savings. So later on, you can get your own house. Look how good is that employer … I had goosebumps when I heard that from the caregiver because look how nice the employer, he support them throughout from, because all of the caregivers good approach or good attitude characteristic towards. On how they, on how he or she take care of the kids and the house, they, they give them home for her extended family. (Interview, 'Laura', community worker and former caregiver, GTA, 2023).

Laura did not elaborate on the living and working conditions for caregivers who chose to remain with their employers after family reunification, nor did any of the women I spoke to discuss their employer offering to hire their husbands or children for other in-home services. Nevertheless, her point about caregivers and their families embodying membership into their employer's family by selling their labour points to the challenges that arise when social reproduction is commodified and when the private household is transformed into a place of waged labour (Schwiter et al., 2018; Fraser, 2016; England, 2010). There are fundamental power imbalances between care workers and their employers "underpinned by the fact that the worker is selling her labour power to the other for a wage" (Stiell and England, 1997, p. 342; Bakan and Stasiulis, 1997; Romero, 2002). Idealizing a model of 'fictive kin' relationships – the illusion of familial intimacy created by framing caregivers as 'one of the family'– can "prove tyrannical" as it blurs the boundaries between the paid and unpaid labour that care workers are engaged in (Dodson and Zincavage, 2007, p. 907). Furthermore, these discourses can normalize the view that caring and domesticity are vocational aptitudes that can be adequately compensated through the 'intrinsic rewards' of caring rather than equitable wages (England, 2005; Meehan and Strauss, 2015; Fraser, 2016). In the context of the migrant care worker's dependence on their employers, fictive kin relationships can hinder the reciprocal exchange of trust, loyalty, and care, reinforcing the precarity they experience.

Laura's reflections also point to the vested interest that middle-class Canadian households have in retaining migrant caregivers to fulfill the social reproductive labour that enables them to participate in the new global economy (Sassen, 2006). The international division of social reproductive labour has resulted in global care chains that systematically transfer the care responsibilities of women in wealthier regions to migrant women in poorer regions, the latter of

which are compelled to leave their own families behind in the care of others (Hochschild, 2000; Parreñas, 2003; Fudge, 2009). Mary Romero (2002) reminds us that waged caring and social reproductive roles are not 'intrinsically demeaning' but become oppressive when embedded in the structural hierarchies of race, gender, class, and citizenship – including the social relations produced by migrant live-in caregiving schemes. The conditionality of status as live-in caregivers means that caregiver migrants and those who employ them do not enter a waged employment relationship as equals (Romero, 2002, p. 5; Goldring and Landolt, 2013). Because these arrangements often facilitate the production of familial bonds, employers might leverage these attachments to keep caregiver immigrants "locked in" to their roles (Tungohan et al., 2015). In doing so, the inequalities of migrant live-in caregiving schemes – and the power asymmetries they produce – are masked but nevertheless persist.

Employers that valorize the familial bonds that care workers have with their children and/or family members also obscures the fact that many of these caregivers have family and children of their own, which obscures the emotional labour of care work (Parreñas, 2003; Pratt, 2012; Romero 2002; Dodson and Zincavage 2007). Gabrielle challenged the normative assumption that the development of familial relations with employers indicated a "good" working experience by explaining the emotional toll of embodying a maternal figure for her employer's children while being separated from her own children and spouse. This led her to seek out the help of an agency to find a new LCP employer that would involve caring for an elderly individual, and not children:

> Gabrielle: Nannying is not for me. And I know I accept that. It's not for me. Because I miss my kids. So, like I'm so attached to them, the kids [of her employer], because the kids that I was looking after are the same age as my kids. That's why when, like, they're crying, they went to my room, even it's my off.
>
> NP: Because they spend more time with you than with their own parents.
>
> Gabrielle: Yeah, and it seems like, makes me exhausted. So, it makes me like, not feeling good all the time. Because I'm like, emotionally… Like drained. That's why when I found another agency, I told him I want to be a caregiver, like looking after the elderly. So that's it, that's the one who gave me for my PR.

Taken together, the asymmetrical power dynamic between employers and caregivers is a notable tension as remaining in caregiving roles is also a strategic decision caregivers make when navigating their responsibilities of family reunification, reproduction, and settlement in Canada. These tensions ultimately shed light on the interlocking dynamics of social reproduction (Meehan and Strauss, 2015), women's agency (England and Dyck, 2012; Schwiter et al., 2018; Parreñas,

2003), and the 'sticky-ness' (Landolt and Goldring, 2013) of precarious legal status in the choice to remain in caregiving occupations.

4.4. Institutional, financial, and social considerations to exiting caregiving

Remaining in caregiving occupations did not mean that caregiver immigrants were stagnant or stopped seeking out alternative opportunities to meet their goals related to family reunification and long-term financial stability. Many of the women I interviewed tried to recertify or upgrade their professional credentials from the Philippines or sought out non-care work opportunities to diversify their economic livelihoods. However, the conditionality of precarious legal status as live-in caregivers meant that some women were "locked in" to their roles as caregivers despite trying to enter different fields. Lynn, who previously worked as an accountant in the Philippines, enrolled in a part-time medical transcriptionist program at a community college in Etobicoke while concurrently working as a live-in caregiver. Her classes were in the evening to accommodate her work schedule. However, when her employer moved houses and she no longer had access to a private entryway, she decided to forego the medical transcriptionist program due to concerns that leaving and entering the property late at night would become a nuisance to her employers. Her experience underscores the constraints of fictive kin relationships, where despite being treated as 'one of the family', caregivers are still paid employees with limits to their social and economic mobility both within and beyond the household (Dodson and Zincavage, 2007):

> When I was in school, I tried medical transcriptionist, yeah, but I just did one [semester], after that, I did not pursue it. At that time when I started the program I was working as live-in with the family, right. During that time, I have my private area, private suite, like, I was living in the basement which has a separate side-door, so I was comfortable going to school because I go in the evening, right. And I come home late at night, like, 10 o'clock in the evening, but when they move to another house, my quarters was in the third floor at the attic. So, during that time, I did not plan of going to school anymore because it would bother them when I come home late at night, because then they will hear me come in the house, right. So, I stopped from there. (Interview, 'Lynn', HC PSW, Toronto, 2023).

Furthermore, upgrading one's professional credentials often entailed significant expenses that could slow down their goals related to family reunification, making the investment seem less worthwhile. This was the case for Gillian, who was a high school teacher in the public education system in the Philippines before migrating to Taiwan, where she worked as a live-in caregiver for an elderly couple for over seven years. Upon migrating to Taiwan, she left behind her husband and her three-year-old daughter. She came to Canada from Taiwan through the LCP in 2009, and after

waiting almost three years for her applications to be processed, she received her open work permit and PR status. She chose not to continue her employment with her LCP employer after being denied a raise and chose instead to pursue a food services position with Subway Restaurants. Even though this occupation differed in social status and renumeration from her career as a teacher, she viewed it as an opportunity to expose herself to different work environments and develop her confidence in a new labour market environment, especially since working as a live-in caregiver limited her exposure to other people. Additionally, it served as an avenue through which she could prepare for family reunification. Her story reveals the confined nature of live-in care work, and how living and working in someone's private household not only curtails one's spatial mobility but also the social connections they make:

> Gillian: So after getting my open work permit, I applied at Subway Restaurant because I was thinking maybe I need to exposed myself right? Because my employer was a Pakistani and it's one-on-one, so I don't have any exposure towards different people, so I thought working in customer service would be a good chance for me to develop my confidence in talking to other people. So I worked in Subway restaurant after that. Until now, actually, I'm working at Subway until now.
>
> NP: And were there other job options that you considered applying to after you completed the program?
>
> Gillian: No, after that, only I focus at Subway and most of the other jobs I have was a cash job, like being a nanny and also cleaning, because it's an easy money, right? So I need to save money for my family. So I resorted to having a cash job. (Interview, 'Gillian', HC and LTC PSW, Toronto, 2023).

Gillian was still interested in restarting her teaching career in Canada, but soon discovered it impractical due to the expenses associated with re-assessing her teaching credentials and the uncertainty of securing a permanent, full-time teaching position:

> Well, I tried. I joined some Philippines teachers' organizations, and then I tried to go through the process. The payment, I think, was more than three hundred and there is no guarantee that I can be, I will pass, or I can be qualified for all those, what do you call this, the assessment. So, I thought, no. And that most of the experiences that I heard when they go back as a teacher, they will be like as a supply teacher, so being a supply teacher would not be sufficient enough for me financially. (Interview, 'Gillian', HC and LTC PSW, Toronto, 2023).

Gillian's decision not to pursue her professional background in teaching shared parallels with Angelica, who migrated to Canada under the FDM in 1986 from Manila, where she worked as a midwife in a large hospital. She was 25 years old and single when she migrated to Canada and

originally planned to continue her midwifery career after completing the FDM. However, she opted not to pursue upgrading courses due to a post-graduate relocation requirement into rural areas at that time. The institutional requirements she encountered shows how other factors can lead to spatial restraints that tie her to an urban context:

> NP: When you came to Canada did you think about getting your midwifery education and credentials upgraded here?
>
> Angelica: Yes, and they said that I had to go back to school to take some course. But I didn't do that, I choose just to work.
>
> NP: Why? What were some of the factors in that decision?
>
> Angelica: Cause if you, if I go to school and I finish it, what they said to me they gonna send me to a rural areas. Yeah. So it's not good for me.

In addition to financial costs, the women I interviewed also discussed the temporal lags related to pursuing a new occupational sector or educational pathway. This was particularly the case for Chantal. Originally from Iloilo, Chantal arrived in Canada under the LCP in 2010 when she was 32 years old after being employed as a factory worker in Taiwan. She found an employer with the help of her sister-in-law, who had already migrated to Canada under the LCP years prior. Although she had family networks in Canada to support her while she completed the LCP, she felt ambivalent about leaving her husband and young daughter behind in the Philippines. Chantal completed obtained her OWP in 2012, but it was not until 2017 that she obtained PR due to long processing delays. Although she had plans to pursue an accounting program after obtaining her OWP, the low wages of being a live-in caregiver and the expenses related to preparing for family reunification meant that she could not afford to pursue this path. She resented the long processing period and how the structural requirements of the LCP curtailed her ability to go to school or work elsewhere while completing the program requirements, all of which added to the difficulty of finding a non-caregiving occupation in the open labour market. In the following excerpt, she problematized the varied dimensions of this waiting period – waiting for her open work permit papers to be processed, waiting for family to arrive, and waiting for eligibility to attend school – as a huge source of discontentment that imposed on her ability to grow her family and pursue alternative career pathways:

> Parang nasayangan ako sa oras, sa time na, you know, dapat kung nakapag aral na ako noon, or nandito na sila [*I seem to have wasted my time. I could have studied by then, or my family could have been here by now*]. I can do more. Like, you know, but very limited ...

> Ayoko, hindi ako ng kontento. [*I didn't want it, I was not satisfied*]. Yung time na naghintay kami, nagantay ako, yung na isang ano kung nang sobrang saya ng ano na oras sana kung nandito na sila nakailang anak siguro kami, *[Because that time that I waited, it was such a waste of time. Like, if my family was here, we could have had more kids*.] like, I want more kids. Tapos, siguro kung mag-aral ako, [*After, If I was able to study*], then I can have a better job. You know? Kaya lang, tapos yung asawa ko din [*The same can be said for my husband*]. Anong magawa mo? Yun ang isang ano ko, isang pinanghinayangan ko. [*What can you do? That's something I regret*.] (Interview, 'Chantal', HC PSW, Toronto, 2023).

The circumstances that shaped Gillian's, Angelica's, and Chantal's decisions to forego upgrading or recertification pathways reveal how the institutional constraints imposed by Canada's caregiver programs can collide with settlement, family, and social reproduction in ways that can constrain the occupational and social mobility of caregiver immigrants during and after completing the program. For women like Gillian and Chantal, who experienced protracted periods of separation from their spouses and young children, these women understandably prioritized securing the financial means required to initiate family reunification processes. Although Angelica was single without dependents after obtaining PR, her desire to restart her midwifery career *and* build her life in an urban setting was constrained by rural relocation requirements. These varied post-caregiver program experiences led women to postpone their professional or educational goals in favor of finding employment that enabled them to promptly meet their financial responsibilities, familial commitments, and settlement goals. However, the financial and temporal costs related to re-certification made it less practical and feasible to go back to school or try a new career, lest it get in the way of providing for and reuniting with their families.

Thus, these stories demonstrate how even if caregiver successfully obtain PR status and reunite with their families in Canada, this does not guarantee a pathway towards higher-paying occupations, nor does it secure a pathway towards their initial occupational or professional goals. Rather, caregivers negotiate their occupational mobility within a constrained context, produced in relation to the 'sticky-ness' of precarious legal status (Landolt and Goldring, 2011), the structurally produced temporal lags, and the changing dynamics of social reproduction.

4.5. Conclusion: charting new pathways

This chapter has outlined how Filipina caregiver immigrants' personal decision-making practices, aspirations, and reproductive life are oftentimes intertwined with the conditionality of precarious legal status in ways that shaped their labour market decisions. Caregiver immigrants enter the open labour market while contending with various dimensions of social and economic

marginalization as a result of migrating to Canada as non-citizen workers, which can compel them to remain in care work or seek out a 'survival job' despite having an OWP. This was not for lack of ambition nor lack of desire, but because of intersecting exclusionary dynamics related to their experiences as migrant live-in caregivers. On the surface, this might seem to privilege an economic logic to their labour market experiences. However, foregrounding their personal and familial circumstances at the point of transitioning into the open labour market reveals the complex interplay of agency and structural constraints that shape these decisions. Rather than being purely economically driven, their choices were deeply informed by social reproduction responsibilities, aspirations for family stability, and the persistent effects of systemic inequities tied to their migration status and labour conditions. This underscores the need to critically examine how structural barriers and individual aspirations intersect, revealing that caregiver immigrants' labour market transitions are neither straightforward nor free of compromise. As Claire says:

> You don't know what you are about to experience …But if you have this, if you have this goal and if you want to pursue them, there's no barrier. There's nothing that can block those goals or, you know, those aspirations you want in life, especially when it comes to your goodness of the family. That's the number one thing I put in my mind, whatever I will experience here, whatever I will before I come here in Canada, I told myself that whatever I really experienced what's along my way, I will do everything to conquer my goals. (Interview, 'Claire', PSW-in-Training, Toronto, 2023).

This argument is not meant to romanticize the resilience of Filipina caregiver immigrants nor to normalize the channeling of migrant women into precarious and devalued social reproductive roles. If, for example, she wants to become a nurse or a teacher but cannot access that kind of profession due to obstacles related to her migration as a live-in caregiver, then it is still an issue even if one sees caregiving as inherently valuable. In a similar vein, I do not mean to suggest that caregiving is inherently unfulfilling, shameful, or negative. Instead, I want to problematize how Canada's live-in caregiver programs are institutionalized processes that contribute to the devaluation, precarity, and stigmatization of care work and how these dynamics influence caregiver immigrants' material outcomes within the labour market and beyond.

Chapter 5 – From permanent resident to personal support worker: *kababayan* networks and the path to PSW work

5.1. Introduction

Scholarship about patterns of labour market segmentation amongst immigrants has illustrated the role of co-ethnic networks in supplying new immigrants with knowledge of job openings, employers, or career advancement opportunities (Waldinger and Lichter, 2006; Novek, 2013; McDowell et al., 2007). I contribute to these discussions by exploring the co-ethnic networks of Filipina caregiver immigrants – what I term *kababayan networks* – and how they function in ways that can lead caregiver immigrants towards PSW roles. While challenges of deskilling and marginalization in the open labour market are not necessarily unique to caregiver immigrants, their experiences are distinctly shaped by the conditions of their migration pathway, including protracted periods of family separation (Pratt, 2012; Banerjee et al., 2018); socio-spatial isolation within the homes of their employers (Bakan and Stasiulis, 1997; 2012; Tungohan et al., 2015) strict limitations on the types of education and training programs they can access (Wadhera, 2021; Banerjee et al., 2017), and the devaluation of caregiving labour (Torres et al., 2012; Pratt, 1998, 2012; Bakan and Stasiulis, 1997). It is in this context that PSW work – as a time-effective, cost-effective, and in-demand occupation – emerges as an opportunity to facilitate socio-economic mobility in the context of the women's experiences as live-in caregivers. As such, I discuss these social networks and transitions in the context of the women's experiences of precarious legal status (Goldring and Landolt, 2011, 2013; Parreñas et al., 2021; Polanco, 2019) and the evolving dynamics of social reproduction (Meehan and Straus, 2015; Schwiter et al., 2018).

My choice to refer to Filipina caregiver immigrants' co-ethnic networks with the term '*kababayan* networks' was inspired by my interview with Maris, who, when discussing her experiences working alongside other Filipina PSWs, said, "We have that trust for each other. It's because we have that kind of culture; you trust each other right. You are *kabayan*. You will not betray your *kabayan*." In Tagalog, *kababayan* refers to 'fellow countryman' or 'compatriot', evoking a sense of shared identity, commonality, and connection linked to a shared homeland. By using the term '*kababayan* networks', I hope to encapsulate the multifaceted nature of Filipina caregiver immigrants' co-ethnic networks, the ways in which they form fictive kinship, and the different ways in which they are embodied. The first section of this chapter will focus on the *kababayan* networks

of the Filipina PSWs I interviewed and how these networks were sources of information, encouragement and empowerment, as well as sources of tension and dissuasion when it came to their occupational transitions after completing a caregiver program. The second section of this chapter will explore the ways in which *kababayan* networks are embedded in the PSW educational landscape in ways that may also channel caregiver immigrants towards PSW occupations.

5.2. *Kababayan* networks and the transition into PSW work

"Looking for a job is very easy because it's word of mouth," Goldie replied in response to my question about her job search experiences after completing the LCP. She continued:

> So, if you're Filipino and you are jobless, I would say you're not a friendly one because, yeah, Filipino people likes to talk on the phone and on the bus, even if you're driving, everywhere you can see Filipino they will smile at you, "hey!" and then they give you their number. "I know a job for you, are you interested?" You know? There's a lot of things like that." (Interview, 'Goldie', LTC and HC PSW, Grimsby (formerly Toronto), 2023).

Her sentiments are reflective of a prominent theme that emerged within my research: for Filipina former caregivers transitioning out of the caregiver program, social networks served as an essential aspect of the job-search process and introduction to PSW work.

The women I interviewed entered PSW work at various points in their post-caregiver program settlement experiences, often learning about this career path through their networks with other Filipino immigrants – many of whom were caregiver immigrants themselves. Many of the women I interviewed described feeling inspired and empowered to pursue a PSW career after seeing friends and family successfully navigate similar transitions. Witnessing their loved ones secure jobs in the PSW sector proved that that they could successfully re-enter the education system with their experiences and land a stable job. For example, Claire was introduced to the PSW sector after a caregiver friend of hers saw other caregivers posting about their PSW certifications on an online Facebook group for employers to find caregivers, nannies, housekeepers, and PSWs in the GTA. Feeling inspired, they decided to pursue their PSW certifications together through a part-time, asynchronous program offered by a Filipino-owned and operated private career college (PCC). Claire came into PSW work only two years after completing the caregiver pilot program and obtaining permanent resident (PR) status:

> Yeah, my friend is doing caregiving full time until now. Since we come here, she's also my batch [same period of arrival]. So, she heard, it's, it's from our mutual friend in a group chat in the caregiver community [on social media]. So, she saw the post that they graduated as PSW and then she decided to enroll. She asked me if I want to enroll too, so I enrolled with them. … So, my friend says let's go for PSW course and I was like, yeah, sure. So, I enrolled

> and then, yeah, from my friend. She referred me to our teacher or admin of the school. And then, yeah, I started. (Interview, 'Claire', PSW-in-Training, Toronto, 2023).

At the time of our interview, she was balancing her PSW education with her work as a server at a hotel in the GTA as well as her continued live-in caregiving employment with her HCP sponsor. Interestingly, she found the server position through one of her former caregiver friends who arrived in Canada at the same time as her:

> My other friend, my batch, our September 2019 caregiver batch that came here. Yeah, she was, she has, the one who gained the open work permit first. So same program that I'm in and same PR program that we are in together, she got the open work permit first and then I got mine. She said, "Oh, there's an opening here in hotel. If you want, I can refer you to my, to our manager." And yeah. And then I gave my resume and that day I was hired. Same day. (Interview, 'Claire', PSW-in-Training, Toronto, 2023).

For Claire, obtaining a PSW certificate served as a stepping stone toward her goal of pursuing a post-secondary education in computer science in Canada, all within the context of reuniting with her teenage daughter in Canada. At the time of our interview, she had received admission into the program computer science program and her daughter's PR papers. Pursuing her PSW certification alongside her caregiver immigrant friends enabled her to gain a Canadian education while working toward her primary academic aspiration and preparing for her daughter's arrival.

Claire's transition into PSW work illustrates a common theme that emerged from my research, which was how becoming a PSW with the encouragement and support of their *kababayan* networks was viewed as a productive and opportunistic endeavour to develop their skillsets and increase their employment options while awaiting other advancement opportunities. This was the case for Gillian, who began her PSW training at a Filipino-owned and operated PCC in her 40s, almost 10 years after arriving to Canada under the LCP. The PCC she attended was located in the Bathurst-Wilson area of Toronto, also known as the city's "Little Manila" neighbourhood. Her classmates were predominantly Filipino immigrants, and her courses were taught by a Filipino former doctor:

> Gillian: Most of us are really like Filipinos, so it's kind of like easy – what do you call this – easy teacher student relationship before. Yeah, and then, we don't have a lot of time, so most of our assignments we just copy from each other.
>
> NP: Was your instructor, also Filipina?
>
> Gillian: Yeah, she's a Filipina. She was also a doctor back home and they migrated here.

In the following excerpt, she discussed how 90% of her friends – all of whom were also former live-in caregivers – were already in the process of pursuing their PSW certification when she decided to pursue this work alongside her part-time job at Subway Restaurants. Her friends' pursuits of their PSW certifications positioned this industry as a form of occupational mobility in the context of their migration as live-in caregivers. However, Gillian did not plan on making PSW work her primary career goal; instead, she viewed this pathway as a 'back-up' in case she wanted to pursue a different occupation in the future. She liked how pursuing her PSW certification at a PCC that offered weekend courses meant that she did not have to quit her part-time job at Subway Restaurants and lose her stream of income while attending school. The benefits of attending a PCC for her PSW certification also included the strong Filipino presence:

> Gillian: Yeah, so most of my friends are studying PSW so I said maybe [since] I'm working somewhere [at Subway Restaurants], I already have time to go to school every Saturday and Sunday. Yeah. And in a private career school, was like not really that expensive and you can pay like down, monthly or every exam. So, I said maybe I can afford, and then I just enrolled as a PSW as a back-up plan just in case I wanted to pursue something else.
>
> NP: And you said you learned about it through your friends.
>
> Gillian: Yes, because most of them, I think 90% are doing PSW, studying PSW.
>
> NP: And did they also all come from the caregiver program too?
>
> Gillian: Mhm, yeah. (Interview, 'Gillian', LTC PSW, Toronto, 2023).

Whereas Claire's and Gillian's transitions into the PSW sector began by formally obtaining their PSW certifications with the support and encouragement of their *kababayan* networks, Goldie was informally incorporated into the PSW workforce before obtaining a PSW certificate through a Filipino friend of hers that owned a PSW agency. Although this friend was not a former caregiver nor did he migrate to Canada through a caregiver program, he was employed as a PSW in a high-end senior living building in Toronto's Forest Hill neighbourhood. She discussed how his personal experiences as a PSW alerted him to a racialized preference for Filipino PSWs in this neighbourhood, which inspired him to start an 'agency' providing Filipino PSWs to clients. While she did not have details on the type of license her friend obtained, Goldie discussed how he began his agency by recruiting from his *kababayan* networks that would not "disappoint" him:

> He himself is a PSW himself, and then when he was a PSW he worked into this high-end area in Forest Hills. It's like a senior building, but it's a high end one. And then there's a

> demand in there that they're looking for, and sometimes there's Filipino PSWs that walk their residents into the dining and then most of the Filipino, most of the workers in there are just Filipinos. I don't know why. In the dining area, you can see they're Filipino. Their nurses, you can see they're Filipino. The cleaners are Filipino *laugh* and then a client might ask him, like, "can you supply me one of the girls? Like what they have?" Something like that. So, that's how he started his business. That's how he started his business and he goes like, "well you know what, maybe there is a potential to just do this business." And then he got his license, and then that's when he recruit people. But he started from his friends. It's not just like, "oh you're Filipino do you want to come and work?" No, he started in his circle of friends that he trusted and also it's like, he knows that those friends can work really good and won't disappoint him. 'Cos these clients are ridiculous and then, they just like Filipino. They're saying that they're hardworking and honest and they don't complain. (Interview, 'Goldie', LTC and HC PSW, Grimsby (formerly Toronto), 2023).

Goldie did not have her PSW certification at the time she was recruited into her friend's PSW agency, but because of her experience as a live-in caregiver, her friend recruited her to work as a companion for low-needs elderly clients. She later discovered he was skimming her wages and was essentially taking advantage of her lack of a PSW certification, which prompted her to leave his agency and obtain her PSW certificate at a PCC. Goldie's story highlights a dark side of social network reliance, and how fictive kin dynamics within *kababayan* networks can be embedded in class divisions in ways that undermine solidarity and support. In Goldie's case, her friend sought to build his agency by capitalizing on her lack of formal certification and her trust as a fellow *kababayan* and friend. This not only underscores the vulnerabilities that can emerge when migrant workers rely on co-ethnic networks for employment, but also illustrates the ambivalent ways in which these networks are embodied.

As we know from prior research, the networks of former live-in caregivers may be limited to those who also entered Canada through a caregiver program due to the socio-spatial isolation that characterize their living and working conditions, which can restrict information about job opportunities to limited sectors (Banerjee et al., 2017). However, I found that the women's stories framed the choice to pursue PSW work as part of a broader livelihood strategy, where they explored different occupations and educational pathways before determining which would best suit theirs and their family's material needs. For instance, when I asked about her decision to pursue a PSW certification, Goldie first discussed her enrollment in a pharmacy technician course, and how she later pivoted towards a PSW certification. Given her experience as a live-in caregiver as well as her *lack* of experience as a pharmacy technician, she figured she would earn more and have more employment opportunities by becoming a PSW:

> I have also one course that I took before, it's called pharmacy technician. I am also into pharmacy technician here in Toronto but I didn't pursue after that because I realized that I'm very new and I'm going to make more money from the thing to be a PSW. It's all about the opportunity because you know why? There's high demand of a caregiver in Toronto. Especially in Toronto. (Interview, 'Goldie', LTC and HC PSW, Grimsby (formerly Toronto), 2023).

Similarly, Maris discussed how her wages as a PSW were higher than if she were to pursue an entry-level position at a bank, which she considered as an option given her license in financial investing:

> You have to look at this right. If I was licensed as a financial services, I had license in investment. If I worked at the bank, which is one of [my] considerations, you will start in the front services. You know how much they pay? They pay two dollars more from the minimum wage. So probably $18, $16. And the pressure from management is high. So, with every dollars that can contribute in your financing, of course you go to the one that is higher. (Interview, 'Maris,', LTC PSW, Toronto, 2023).

5.3. Transitioning out of PSW work?

Thus far, the experiences of the women I interviewed reveal how caregiver immigrants negotiate their labour market decisions in relation to what would best contribute to their upward economic mobility using the information, resources, and experiences they have on hand, including their observations of those in their social networks successfully transitioning into PSW work. However, Erika, a community informant[4] I interviewed, cautioned that this could potentially lead Filipina women to construct a range of occupational opportunities that is limited to the caregiving sector, with PSW work viewed as the only pathway towards occupation mobility. Like Julia, Erika is a Filipina woman herself and a former live-in caregiver engaged in advocacy work for migrant caregivers in the GTA and beyond.

> The challenges that I see when they're looking for a job is, after getting an open work permit, they want to go or find the job close to the caregiving. Me, myself, I always tell them, if there is a chance, why not go a little farther so you can see, maybe there's an opportunity outside caregiving or PSW or anything? And we [referring to the organization she works with] try to educate them and find new skills, develop new skills after open work permit. So, most of them, they want to stick to that program or close to that program. So those are, some of the challenges I see. (Interview, 'Erika', community informant, Toronto, 2023).

She continued to discuss how a caregiver's life stage after obtaining an OWP or PR might hinder their confidence to go back to school or when entering the open Canadian labour market, thereby

[4] Although I framed this participant group in Section 1.5. as "community workers and advocates", this participant specifically asked to be referred to as a 'community informant.'

limiting their imagination of the opportunities that are attainable to them. She discussed how many of her clients were reluctant about going back to school to upgrade or recognize their credentials from the Philippines due to notions of employability and the pressures around providing for their family. Because PSWs are in demand, caregiver immigrants may feel like they have a better chance at finding employment within the caregiving sector compared to other fields that seem more competitive and difficult to break into – especially if they see their networks do the same thing and succeed. Julia also linked this to employment norms in the Philippines that devalue the labour and employability of older women. While her comments were specifically about nurse-trained caregivers from the Philippines who pivoted towards PSW work, her points about a caregiver's life stage are particularly pertinent given that many caregivers obtain PR later in life when re-training must be considered in the context of their life stage and social reproduction responsibilities:

> I have so many nurses that become PSWs that they refuse to go back to school … But I told them because you've been a caregiver inside your employer's home for a while, that's why there's also a chance that you need to consider upgrading your knowledge, so I encourage them with that, but some of them it's like, no it's not for me anymore. I'm already 40 years old and I think I won't be able to make it. And part of it is I think, and I believe, because in the Philippines if you reach 35, even your 30s, your employability is very slim, so that's why they said, why they are hiring us, they're hiring more PSWs, we would like to become PSWs instead of continuing studying to become nurses … with my clients that they just chose to become PSW not because they don't have other aspirations, but because they felt like that's the easiest way for them to earn money. (Interview, 'Erika', community worker and former caregiver, Toronto, 2023).

Erika continued by pointing out the value in having one's credentials or certifications reassessed in a Canadian context while also problematizing the financial costs that are imposed on caregivers. She emphasized how caregivers are expected to support themselves and their families while earning minimum wage, which makes it less feasible, practical, and overall, more challenging for those seeking to exit live-in caregiving by pursuing higher education. In the following excerpt, she underscored how federal immigration and labour policies have historically imposed significant restrictions on the types of education programs caregiver immigrants could pursue while waiting for their PR papers to be processed. She noted how the misalignment of immigration policies and post-secondary education policies and programs could result in immigrant workers being excluded from domestic tuition rates and tuition loan programs, further compounding their inability to pursue a post-secondary education or re-training in Canada:

> The first response from them is, they're only getting like $15/hour for them to go to go back to school to complete the education. It's way too high. There's no way they can afford that [tuition]. Only recently, the government, the immigration, Minister Sean Fraser, he allowed these migrant workers, including caregivers, to go back to school without having to apply for a study permit because a lot of them cannot meet the education requirements. But then when they call the colleges, it's still an international rate. Because if you are a PR or permanent resident, you can access the OSAP [Ontario Student Assistance Program]. But this group, they cannot access an OSAP. Also, they're working full time. How can they go to school? Even if they have a program online, the caregivers, they work – most of them – they work 12 hours a day. Only few works really 8 or 9 hours. So, by the time they finish their work, they go to the computer, they're already exhausted. (Interview, 'Erika', community informant, Toronto, 2023)

Julia discussed how the fear and discomfort of trying something new can also serve as a significant barrier to a caregiver immigrant's confidence in the open labour market, hindering them from expanding their imagination of what is possible and pursuing non-care work opportunities. In the following quote, she called attention to the competitive nature of the open labour market and the anxiety that might emerge for women who are unsure how they will fare as job candidates, as their Canadian work experience is limited to live-in caregiving and their educational and professional backgrounds are often devalued by Canadian employers: "They [caregivers] tried to work other jobs but they felt that it's more comfortable, and also more stable for them to stay at homes looking after children or after seniors because of the competition" (Interview, 'Julia', community worker and former caregiver, Toronto, 2023). She drew on her own experiences as a live-in caregiver to link the anxiety caregiver immigrants have when entering the open labour market to their experiences of precarious legal status, the lack of knowledge about their rights, and instances of abuse and exploitation at the hands of their employers:

> I myself experienced abuse from workplace. And I know how it's like, how difficult is to get out of that place where you felt like you're a victim. You don't know where to go to, you don't know who to approach, you don't know nothing. Even if they're telling you, other people are telling you that you have the rights here, but what are the rights? They're just saying rights. What are those rights? It has to be, for me, written in black and white so I can understand what are these rights. Because otherwise it won't help me counter all those abuses and things because how can I approach my employer telling her this is an abuse? But knowing that I don't have anything or any knowledge about the rights at work, things like that. (Interview, 'Julia', community worker and former caregiver, Toronto, 2023).

Erika reiterated similar sentiments about how precarious legal status can lead caregiver immigrants to internalize a sense of fear and deportability in ways that might persist even after they transition into more secure legal status categories. Heightened feelings of fear and suspicion are

often tied to experiences of employer abuse or loss of status – both first-hand experience *and* witnessing other Filipina caregivers endure these struggles:

> They're very scared to try new things or to do something for themselves. They are very scared because before coming to Canada, they were already told, 'Oh if you do this, they will send you back home. No, if you do that, you would be deported by your lawyer or by your consultant.' So, if they have problem with consultants or lawyers or agency, they try to keep quiet and say nothing. And also another challenge that I encounter is no matter how much you tell them that their rights is being protected. Their mind is already closed and, they won't do anything. (Interview, 'Erika', community informant, Toronto, 2023).

The sense of fear amongst Filipina caregivers was something Alice contended with after completing the LCP and choosing to upgrade her nursing credentials from the Philippines. Alongside Angela, she was one of the two caregiver immigrants I spoke with who intended on transitioning out of the PSW sector and was successfully able to do so by having her nursing credentials recognized in Canada. Alice is a single mother from Novaliches, Quezon City, who migrated to Canada through the LCP in 2009 after working as a nurse in Saudi Arabia for four years, leaving behind her one -year-old son and three-year-old daughter. She chose to migrate to Canada through the LCP as it appeared to be the 'easiest' and fastest route towards pursuing her long-time "Canadian RN dream". After she obtained her OWP, she continued working for her LCP sponsors during the day, while picking up shifts as an HC PSW through two PSW agencies and working overnight as a medical transport driver. It is in this context that her caregiver network expressed cautionary sentiments about upgrading her credentials and working outside of caregiving, warning her of immigration raids and being deported:

> And the people I met also that time, like some of the Filipinas, they're really not that good; they will tell me, "Oh you have to be careful sometimes the immigration is doing a raid", blah blah blah blah. I said, "well I have a work permit", [other caregivers countered], "Even though!". You know? There's just no support at all. … they're like degrading you and trying to scare you saying that "oh, the border or immigration will raid you. (Interview, 'Alice', RPN and former HC PSW, Toronto, 2023).

The fear of deportation or encountering immigration raids were not common themes that emerged from my interviews with Filipina PSWs, but these comments nevertheless illustrate the various ways in which precarious legal status regimes contribute to lasting ontological insecurity (Lewis et al., 2015).

Alice went on to explain how the fears around upgrading one's credentials might also be linked to the difficulties and financial expenses of upgrading nursing credentials in Canada, which

might disempower internationally trained nurses from continuing their nursing careers in Canada after completing the caregiver program:

> The processing is so difficult until now. It takes a lot of time, it takes a lot of effort, and it takes a lot of patience as well, and empowerment, because like I said most of them quit already, they don't want to be a nurse anymore, they just want to be a PSW all their life. (Interview, 'Alice', RPN and former HC PSW, Toronto, 2023).

Despite being discouraged by her peers, she successfully passed the Registered Practical Nurse exam with the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) on her first attempt. However, the CNO revoked her certification shortly after she passed and required her to take sixteen additional courses to have her Philippine credentials recognized in the Canadian context due to changes to the CNO requirements. Although this was a major setback and despite the credit card debt she took on to pay for the course fees, she recognized the value in receiving a Canadian nursing education:

> Yeah, it's difficult, but I told myself maybe it's a good thing also that I was able to study because we have a course that is like nursing in Ontario, meaning its mostly about how you integrate with Canadian healthcare system. I don't know anything about Canadian healthcare system, Saudi Arabia is different, Philippines is different, and here is really different. So I was like, oh yeah, maybe it's a good thing also that I studied here so that I was able to integrate well in a Canadian healthcare system … I finished it in two years. Yeah. But some of my classmates they told me I should have protest because I had already passed the exam, I'm just about to register to do the registration that time and then all of a sudden they said to me no, you have to study. I was like yeah, I think there's a reason why I didn't, and it's a good thing also that I studied here, like right now all the things I studied before is coming back to me, like oh yeah, this is what we studied before. (Interview, 'Alice', RPN and former HC PSW, Toronto, 2023).

Alice's perseverance in the face of institutional constraints does not negate the very real challenges of losing authorized immigration status in Canada, which her *kababayan* networks were so fearful of. Of the 10 Filipina women I interviewed, Angela was the only one who lost her legal status in Canada and became undocumented. She was a practicing nurse in Pangasinan when she migrated to Canada in 2003 through the LCP. She was 34 years old and left her husband and two young children behind. She had always planned to resume her nursing career in Canada after completing the LCP and had passed the CNO exam while under the auspices of the program. She discussed how she was always looking for 'better' employers and went through three different ones while under the LCP. In these efforts to improve her living and working conditions as a live-in caregiver, she lost her status because she was not able to fulfill the 24-months of live-in work during the four-year period. Someone in her *kababayan* networks introduced her to INTERCEDE, an immigrant settlement organization in Toronto with a mandate to advocate for the rights of migrant

care workers and their families, and with their help, she was able to make her case to stay in Canada. Her Member of Parliament helped her connect with immigration, who allowed her to remain with her employer until she was able to complete the full 24-months. This process took her five years in total, during which she was separated from her spouse and children:

> Angela: It was difficult because before you need to finish the 24 months, two years to complete the live-in prior to applying for PR. But for me, because I'm always looking for another employer - I had 3 employers before – my time was not enough to complete the 24 months. So yeah, it was really hard for me, and I was struggling. I went for help from the government, from the MP [Member of Parliament]. And before for the Filipinos there was a community group, and I went there and it was a big help. Because they give a letter and everything explaining that, "she needs to stay because she's a nurse, she passed the exam" and everything. Because when I came here, was 2003, so I applied for my CNO exam. I did it 2004, so I passed it at once. But unfortunately, I could not apply for that position as a nurse because I am still under live-in caregiver.
>
> NP: Do you remember the name of the MP who helped you? And the community organization?
>
> Angela: I forgot the name of the MP, but it was in Scarborough area. INTERCEDE was the organization. They help me, they give me a letter, and I kept the letter with me. I went to the MP and the MP told me to stay with my employer. They contacted immigration and they said to stay with my employer until you finish [the LCP], until you get your open permit and your immigrant [PR status]. Until I got my immigrant I didn't leave my employer. 5 years … So I stayed with them. I was really struggling because you're living with other family, I stay with them, and you're away from your family too. When I left the Philippines, I had small kids. It's really hard for me. So five years, and then I took them, and they came here after 5 years. And then that's it. Yeah. We been here for how many years now. (Interview, 'Angela', LTC RN, Toronto, 2023).

Angela's and Alice's experiences call attention to the role of mentorship and advocacy efforts from community and activist organizations like INTERCEDE in serving as sources of camaraderie and political support. Not only do activist and advocacy organizations provide institutional support navigating structural challenges related to citizenship and one's legal rights, but they are also another source of empowerment that can shape caregiver immigrants' labour market experiences. The feelings of disempowerment – both inside and outside of her *kababayan* networks – that Alice experienced while having her nursing credentials recognized in Canada inspired her to become involved with an organization supporting and mentoring nurses from the Philippines to re-certify their nursing credentials in Canada, especially after her own experiences navigating the re-certification process all by herself, without any resources:

> And then when my open permit comes, that's what I said I have PSW job. And then when I totally left them, that's the time I have two PSW jobs in the morning and then going to

> school and then in night time I'm medical transport driver. You know when I'm actually, when I'm telling my story to everyone, because in our nursing organization - I'm in an organization now [name redacted for anonymity]. I think last year, I'm the one to give my testimony to them of all the hardship that I been through, I was able to be a nurse to pursue my Canadian RN dream, it's just like to motivate others and empower others, also other nurses who as a caregiver here and don't want to be a nurse anymore, so you know, I was able to do that … like I said this is helping other nurses who are not yet a nurse here to be a nurse, or to pursue their Canadian RN dream or RPN dream, because like I said the processing is so difficult until now. It takes a lot of time, it takes a lot of effort, and it takes a lot of patience as well, and empowerment, because like I said most of them quit already, they don't want to be a nurse anymore, they just want to be a PSW all their life. In here, we're trying to help them, you know, upgrade their profession and become a nurse. (Interview, 'Alice', LTC RPN, Toronto, 2023).

However, Angela and Alice were the only women I interviewed who were aware of community organizations with political mandates to support migrant care workers. When I inquired about whether they sought out supports from community-based organizations or government services, most of the women I interviewed said no. They were either unaware that these resources existed, or they were not inclined to seek them out as they were more focused on working to provide for their families back home and facilitate their reunification and settlement in Canada. This raises an interesting tension between the immediate needs of migrant caregivers to sustain their livelihoods on one hand, and the potential long-term benefits of accessing political advocacy as well as community-based legal and social services on the other.

Taken together, these stories nuance the significant role that *kababayan* networks can play in shaping caregiver immigrants' labour market decisions towards PSW work. While these networks provide information and emotional support in ways that might contribute to their occupational mobility vis-à-vis PSW work, they might also reproduce feelings of fear in ways that discourage caregiver immigrants from pursuing their occupational mobility goals. My empirical work is consistent with existing scholarship about the role of co-ethnic diasporic networks in supplying new immigrants with knowledge of job openings, employers, or career advancement opportunities, which may in-turn facilitate ethnic patterns of labour market segmentation (Waldinger and Lichter, 2006; Bauder, 2006). As critics of network theory argue, however, focusing solely on the networks that immigrants have is insufficient for explaining why ethnic labour market segmentation and stratification occurs, as these theories understate the structural mechanisms that might contribute to ethnic labour market segmentation (Peck, 1996). The following section will explore how caregiver immigrants *kababayan* networks are entangled with the broader PSW educational landscape as an institutional mechanism regulating the PSW labour market.

5.4. The entanglement of *kababayan* networks within the PSW educational landscape

5.4.1. Private career colleges and Filipino networks

As discussed in Chapter 3, PCCs tend to be more attractive to new immigrants due to lower tuition fees and the fast-paced and flexible structures, which can minimize the financial and temporal costs of obtaining a Canadian education and facilitates efficient entry into the labour market. The experiences of the women I interviewed also suggested that the recruitment practices that PCCs engage in may play a direct role in channelling Filipina caregiver immigrants into PSW roles. For example, Gabrielle discussed how some PCC programs offer referral discounts to students to incentivize others to enroll in their program. While the women I interviewed did not discuss whether they used or obtained a referral bonus when enrolling in their PSW programs, Gabrielle observed this phenomenon happening within her *kababayan* network:

> Because some Filipinos just go in private schools because it's more quicker ... Even before they do like referrals, so we have discount. And especially like, 'cause before I was always like convinced to do PSW because "oh, you can have a discount, you can just go jump into some course because I'm already working as a caregiver." So, they just have like a discount. (Interview, 'Gabrielle', Hospital PSW, GTA, 2023).

Erika discussed how PCC PSW programs are aware that a strong Filipino presence can foster enrollment rates amongst Filipino immigrants, especially if the PCC is owned and operated by Filipino individuals or families:

> They play a big role in this, you know, these PSW schools, because especially if the owner of the school is also a Filipino, the teachers are Filipino, the teaching would be a lot easier for them [Filipino PSW students]. They can understand more, and they will have more, or the facility also if it's owned by Filipino, or at least a Filipino is in the administration. They play a big role because they most likely will employ the Filipino PSW students. (Interview, 'Erika', community informant, Toronto, 2023)

Her description of the influential power of PSW programs with a strong Filipino presence - whether in the student body or within the management and/or ownership of the institution - relates strongly to how Lynn described her PSW education experience. She attended a PCC PSW program in the late 1990s while still employed with her FDM employer, when her daughter was two years old. The school she attended was owned by a Filipino family, and she found it through an advertisement in a Filipino newspaper. Although she did not attend the school with any of her caregiver friends, she liked having many Filipino classmates and that the owner was Filipino too. Furthermore, the

flexible nature of the program meant that she could pick up casual cleaning jobs for extra income if the opportunity presented itself:

> It was fun because I did it on the weekends right. Like I worked from Monday to Friday, and on the weekend I did schooling. It was a change of environment when you would meet 99% of the students there were all Filipinos, yeah. So at that time when I was in school I was already married and I already had [my daughter]. So, with my school at [name of PCC redacted] as PSW, there were times I still have part-time job. Like I would go to clean houses in between those [classes]. (Interview, 'Lynn', HC PSW, Toronto, 2023).

When Lynn became a PSW, she found her clients exclusively with the help of her long-time former caregiver friend, Alison, who referred her to clients in need of a PSW. She also discussed how they sometimes covered each other's shifts when the other was unable to work:

> It was always Alison. Referral from friends ... Whenever they need, like if Alison says, "oh I have this client who needs like 8 hours on a Saturday and 8 hours on a Sunday." So it depends on the client as to how many hours they need me to work. (Interview, 'Lynn', HC PSW, Toronto, 2023).

Evidently, the influence of social networks in fostering PSW enrollment was not lost on Danica. She recounted how, historically, a significant proportion of enrollments in her school were from internationally-trained nurses – predominantly from the Philippines, Jamaica, and other Caribbean countries – who came to Canada as caregivers and pursued PSW work as a stepping stone to resuming their nursing careers in Canada. She continued, emphasizing how the demography of student enrollments seemed to correspond with immigration policy:

> I would say in the 80s and 90s and early 2000s, they were all caregivers. All caregivers. A lot of them were nurses or took the caregiver certificate program in the Philippines, that's one of the visa requirements too, is you take the caregiver certificate there, and yeah. They came here, that was another way for them to get their PR and bring their family over. (Interview, 'Danica', Executive Director, PCC, Filipina, Toronto, 2023).

> What I've noticed the trend is, which whatever group Canada opens their doors, like let's say one year, like before Filipinos, it was Caribbean. So first, I think when you are coming from another country, and you were in a medical field, it's [PSW] a very quick course and you can make money right away. And a lot of them come here and they take the program so they could get a better paying job. It's better than working at Tim's or factories. And then while they're working as PSWs after they get their certificates, they go and they go to community college and they upgrade, they're always upgrading. (Interview, 'Danica', Executive Director, PCC, Filipina, Toronto, 2023).

She explicitly attributed high enrollment numbers at her school to word-of-mouth within Filipino communities, to the point that she does not invest in multiple forms of marketing.

> I have a sign in Scarborough and one right at the corner at Bathurst and Finch. It's like a mobile [sign], like those mobiles? That's my only marketing. Everything else is referral. I honestly don't - I used to do events, but I didn't get anything from those. (Interview, 'Danica', Executive Director, Toronto, 2023).

It is worth commenting on the geography of this school's advertising signage. For one, Scarborough has historically had a sizeable Filipino population, with Filipinos representing 8.8% of the area's visible minority population (City of Toronto, 2023). And although placing signs near Bathurst and Finch make sense given the school's proximity to this location, it is important to note the area's socio-cultural designation as "Little Manila" due to the high population of Filipino immigrants settling there. Although Danica did not elaborate further on why she placed signs where she did, it is reasonable to expect that part of her rationale included the knowledge that these places have a high percentage of Filipino immigrants living, working, and moving through there.

The spread of information and influence across Filipino networks was so prevalent in driving enrolment numbers that Danica would see 'whole families' become PSWs. However, she also mentioned being able to tell if someone – particularly the children of PSWs – was 'not ready' to pursue a career as a PSW or a nurse. In such cases, she would turn them away.

> Every time a student graduates, they refer. I've had families. The wife came first, the husband came after, the children came and took PSW. I've had whole families and generations. Grandmother, like mothers who sent their grandkids to PSW to do the same. I mean, there's a lot of people I refuse. Like a lot of these, you know, mothers want their children to be nurses or PSWs, but I could see when they come in they don't want it. They're happy working wherever they're working. You know, I, I'd say to the mom, like, don't waste their time and your money. You know, let them figure it out if they want to come back later, but right now, they're not ready. They're not ready. (Interview, 'Danica', Executive Director, Toronto, 2023).

Her point about entire families becoming PSWs might indicate how labour market segmentation may begin within the family, perhaps indicating how stereotypes about the 'Filipino healthcare worker' are embedded and reinforced in families. This seems to be underpinned by a 'normative' expectation amongst Filipina mothers that their children should pursue a career in healthcare.

The ownership and operation of PCC PSW programs by healthcare professionals from the Philippines, along with the targeted recruitment of Filipinos to attend these schools, is a phenomenon worth exploring. I can only speculate about the class positions, social capital, and financial resources that enabled these healthcare professionals to open PCC PSW training institutions since I was only able to interview one Filipino-owned and operated PCC. However, Gillian's and Claire's experience attending schools owned by Filipino doctors and nurses, as well

as the fact that the PCC Danica owns was opened by her mother who migrated to Canada as a nurse, might suggest that these institutions are established by Filipino immigrants who occupy relatively privileged class positions. These individuals may have migrated to Canada through less precarious pathways and might have benefitted from their positions as doctors and nurses in the Philippines to accumulate the financial resources and social capital to open businesses that specifically target Filipino immigrants. In other words, this might indicate that the PSW education sector *itself* has come to be seen by entrepreneurial and class-privileged Filipino immigrants as a pathway towards upward class mobility. This class division could potentially represent the higher status of those who have been in Canada longer and did not migrate with precarious legal status (Eric, 2012). Furthermore, it reflects the 'care penalty' associated with entry into Canada through a live-in caregiver program and the deskilling that these immigrants experience. (Lightman et al., 2021). However, I am cautious about assuming the migration pathways of those who opened these businesses – perhaps they also migrated to Canada with precarious legal status and navigated their way through various challenges to engage in entrepreneurial pursuits. Nevertheless, the ability to tap into caregiver immigrant networks to bolster one's entrepreneurial pursuits as the owner of a private career college illustrates the class divisions between 'ethnic entrepreneurs' and caregiver immigrants who continue to be channelled towards caregiving occupations. This raises important questions about how the privatization and commodification of care might lead to reinforced class and citizenship divisions within ethnic communities (Browne et al., 2006; Nazareno et al., 2022).

5.4.2. Community colleges

The embeddedness of *kababayan* networks within the CC PSW program landscape is different compared to PCC PSW programs, as community colleges are much larger institutions with broader educational mandates. These networks seemed to play a less significant role in channeling Filipina caregiver immigrants towards PSW programs at the CC level compared to the PCC level. The insights from the CC educators I spoke with seemed to highlight the practical and economic reasons related to time and costs to explain why new immigrants or international students might choose to pursue a PSW program over other options. This included lower tuition costs compared to other programs:

> PSW is not as expensive as the other courses. That's why they [international students] choose to take PSWs. I think the cost is around 15 grand compared to other programs that cost around 20 to 25. So that's another drive why international students choose to be PSW. (Interview, 'Sarah', faculty member, community college, Toronto, 2023)

Furthermore, PSW programs are often shorter compared to other programs offered by CCs, which would allow students to enter the labour force quickly. In Sarah's words, "In one year, one academic year, you can get a job. And there are definitely jobs to be had as a PSW. I think that's a huge pull for a lot of students." (Interview, 'Sarah', faculty member, community college, Toronto, 2023). Bonnie similarly discussed how the short program duration was a key reason that immigrants might choose to attend a PSW program over other technical or applied programs offered by community colleges:

> PSW is a short program. It's 8 months, it's just 3 semesters, and then you get your certificate. Even some of the colleges are offering a shorter version of their education. I know for Community Colleges we have the standard 3 semesters, so we're kind of consistent in the delivery. I know for some of the colleges from speaking with my colleagues that they run the PSW accelerated, 12 weeks and you get your certificate right away, and all that. So, I think that's one of the reasons. You get your certificate and you can work right away (Interview, 'Bonnie', program coordinator and faculty member, community college, Toronto, 2023).

She continued by explaining how students do not have to purchase any additional tools to enter this line of work compared to other sectors that would require students to purchase additional materials. The low costs were a practical reason for enticing students to enroll, especially new immigrants whose financial resources might be limited:

> It really requires, it doesn't require much, like for example if you want to do nursing – its 4 years and you need to have other tools and more studies, more requirements. In PSW, yes you do study, but then all you do is just bring yourself. There's no other tools. Like if they go to mechanic, they have to all these tools that they have, or if they want to go into carpentry or handyperson, you have to have tools. If you want to go PSW, all you have to do is bring yourself, and your care, your knowledge and skills that you can perform the care plan that is provided to the individual. (Interview, 'Bonnie', program coordinator and faculty member, community college, Toronto, 2023).

Both Bonnie and Sarah discussed how these characteristics often attracted international students who had no intention of pursuing a PSW career but were looking for an efficient way to bolster their applications for permanent residency in Canada:

> I really don't know a lot about immigration policy, and I do believe in order to get their PR status, permanent resident, I do believe they have to take at least a, is it a two year or two, one year program? So therefore, we do get some students, and I'm well aware of this, we get students who have no intention of ever going into the field. (Interview, 'Sarah', faculty member, community college, Toronto)

Bonnie similarly discussed how domestic students were more likely to remain in the PSW sector compared to international students, the majority of whom are nursing professionals in their home countries:

> For most of my international students, they don't really end up being a PSW. Some of them shift to other areas as soon as they get their documentations and their papers. 'Cos it's just a stepping stone for them to come into Canada. I say that it's more of the domestic applicants that I can see that they really want to become PSW, I cannot say that for the international group of students. I think for the international group of students it is their stepping stone. Cos these are professionals back in their home country, and most of them are nurses and they go into nursing when they finish their PSW. (Interview, 'Bonnie', program coordinator and faculty member, community college, Toronto, 2023).

While not specifically about Filipino students, these reasons broadly contextualize how PSW work may emerge as an accessible educational pathway to facilitate settlement and integration into the labour market, regardless of one's prior educational or professional backgrounds.

The marketing and recruitment strategies of community colleges tend to fall under the purview of broader recruitment practices of the institution and might therefore be less focused or explicit about targeting specific ethnic groups for specific programs. This was the case for Bonnie. She discussed the recruitment strategies of the institution she works at, pointing to the relatively broad and well-funded strategies compared to smaller, family-owned PCCs:

> Open house three times a year, we also participate in the colleges of Ontario fair that is happening in October. Those are the marketing strategies that I get myself involved. Outside of that, I know marketing people have other things. You can see [name of college redacted] all over Toronto, I can see them on subways, buses, on billboards, and TV. That's part of their stuff, but where I am involved is with the open house. … The last year it was done in Enercare Centre[5]. And these are high school students that are already in grade 10 or grade 12 and are looking for a career in college. (Interview, 'Bonnie', program coordinator and faculty member, community college, Toronto, 2023).

Put another way, the recruitment strategies of community colleges may not be as explicitly catered towards Filipina immigrants in the same way Danica's school was, and word of mouth recruitment may not be a prevalent pattern.

Nonetheless, the community college representatives I spoke with drew from their experiences in PSW education to reflect on why Filipina immigrants might gravitate towards PSW work in ways that echoed the narratives shared by Danica. One of the key themes that emerged

[5] The Enercare Centre is a large exhibition and event centre in the City of Toronto, hosting 7 exhibit halls with maximum capacities ranging from 1900 to 4600 people.

was the relationship between PSW enrollment and broader immigration trends. Like Danica's point about student enrollment reflecting wider immigration policies, Sarah described how the demography of their student enrolments tends to align with national immigration trends, with international students from India, the Philippines, and African and Caribbean countries comprising the largest groups in recent years:

> I'd say probably for the last few years, especially given the immigration in Canada and how we have, you know, we, we are definitely bringing in more immigrants into Canada. My students come from a variety of places around the world. There's no question I get Filipino, I get African, I get those from India. Jamaica. You know, rarely I'll see some from the UK, but not very often. But I'd say those are probably my biggest groups. I would say India, Filipino, and African or. From the Caribbean islands, Jamaica Trinidad, Tobago, those islands. (Interview, 'Sarah', faculty member, community college, Toronto)

Furthermore, the PSW program is a relatively accessible education program for new immigrants seeking to streamline their entrance into the Canadian workforce, and by extension, their ability to apply for PR status. The following quote from Sarah, for example, discussed how PSW programs are often utilized as a stepping stone, especially by internationally trained nurses who await their re-training/re-certification processes, reaffirming Danica's earlier point:

> We get a lot of internationally prepared nurses who are hoping to get their registration approved by the college. But while they're waiting for approval, they can take the PSW program, and they can work as a PSW while waiting to get their registered status so they can work either as an RPN. (Interview, 'Sarah', faculty member, community college, Toronto)

Her comments reflect Angela and Alice's experiences engaging in PSW work to resume their nursing careers in Canada. Bonnie reiterated similar comments while also linking the LCP to the proliferation of Filipina students in PSW programs versus other applied or accelerated programs. Although she highlighted the high demand for PSWs as a logical reason leading Filipino immigrants to enroll in PSW programs, she called attention to the cultural values of Filipino communities as a factor shaping their decisions to enter the PSW sector:

> I really find that Filipinos are caregivers. Yeah. I can say that with a good footing because even if you go to Hong Kong, caregivers there are 99.9% Filipinos. Singapore, same thing. The nannies, the caregivers, same thing. So, with the LCP that's really huge, I know for a fact some very close friends of mine came into Canada, they're both nurses they came in through the LCP. Nurses that work in the hospital, before the international studies boomed, it was the live-in caregiver program that was an access for nurses and teachers back in the Philippines to come to Canada, as a stepping stone to migrate. (Interview, 'Bonnie', program coordinator and faculty member, community college, Toronto, 2023).

Taken together, the embeddedness of *kababayan* networks within the PSW educational landscape and the ways in which they function at the CC level remains unclear. Amongst the 10 Filipina PSWs I interviewed, only Gabrielle and Alice obtained their PSW certificate from a community college, which might suggest that the community college pathway is the less popular option amongst caregiver immigrants looking to transition into the PSW workforce. For Gabrielle, her choice to attend a CC was facilitated by provincial policies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that covered the cost of tuition for students enrolling in a PSW program. She recounted to me that she had an explicit desire *not* to become a PSW because of the strain and stress that she witnessed amongst her friends who were in this line of work. She was also critical of the low wages and challenging working conditions that many PSWs must endure. However, the free tuition offered to students pursuing a PSW program was an opportunity to obtain a Canadian education that she could not pass up:

> Actually, I become a PSW when the COVID comes. Just recently. So, when I got PR, I told myself not to be a PSW. *laughs* I eat my words. Because before, it's really, I saw my friends... [N: The pay was also not very good]. Yes, that's why, I don't, I don't want, like, I know how hard it is to be a PSW, even before. And the pay is very low, and the workplace is horrible before. That's why I don't want to work with kind of workplace like that. Because I have kids, I don't want to bring my stress to my family, especially since they just came and they're still small. That's why it took me until COVID. and it's free. That's why I grab it. And you know, PSW is very expensive before. Even right now it's more. And I'm so lucky and good timing. (Interview, 'Gabrielle', Hospital PSW, GTA, 2023).

5.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed how caregiver immigrants' *kababayan* networks can mediate access to PSW work in the context of their experiences of precarious legal status. *Kababayan* networks were sources of inspiration and empowerment; here, these networks fostered information sharing and support for caregiver immigrants while also channeling them towards PSW roles. Filipino-owned and operated PSW PCCs were positioned as key sites that facilitated this process, while the role of PSW CCs remained ambiguous. However, *kababayan* networks were also sites of tension and dissuasion, where the experience of branching out were met with words of caution and expressions of fear.

Despite the important role that migrant advocacy organizations play in supporting caregivers in their labour market transitions, only two of the women I spoke to sought out these supports during their labour market searches. When I asked about whether they sought out supports from community organization or other social services, most of the women said no. When

asked why, many of the women discussed how their sole focus was on finding employment that would enable them to continue providing for their families and eventually sponsor their migration to Canada. Caregiver immigrants' *kababayan* networks served as their main, if not only source of information regarding labour market opportunities. This raises questions about the *basis* of caregiver immigrants' *kababayan* networks and the ways in which they are maintained or embodied in the context of their occupational and legal status transitions. Here, I am reminded of Sharon Quinsaat's (2024) argument that collective identities linked to the homeland are actively produced through migrants' political engagement to advocate for their rights at home and abroad, destabilizing the normative assumption that diasporic communities emerge automatically. Her insights raise questions about how *kababayan* networks can be leveraged not just as sites of empowerment and support, but also spaces where political consciousness and advocacy can emerge (Tungohan, 2023).

With this chapter, I contribute to existing discussions about the role of ethnic social networks in fostering processes of labour market segmentation by narrowing in on the complex ways in which caregiver immigrants' *kababayan* networks both enable and constrain their labour market mobilities after completing the caregiver program. As shown in Alice's decision to engage in community organizing and mentorship work, having social, emotional, and institutional support from one's social networks is crucial for caregiver immigrants navigating the open labour market and contemplating alternative academic and or professional pathways. However, this is also in tension with the fact that these networks can also reinforce or normalize their channeling towards healthcare and caregiving roles as the default or 'end goal', reproducing patterns of labour market segmentation. These social practices run the risk of reifying occupational hierarchies within the healthcare sector, reinforcing the stigmatization of PSW work at the bottom of the healthcare ladder and nursing roles nearer to the top. This is not to overshadow the precarities that characterize PSW labour and contribute to its devaluation in the labour market, but rather to complicate how we understand the channeling of caregiver immigrants into PSW roles.

Chapter 6: The discursive production of appropriate PSW subjectivities

6.1. Introduction

Feminist scholarship about the embodied and relational nature of body work (McDowell, 2009; Twigg et al., 2011; Wolkowitz, 2002; England and Dyck, 2010) has illustrated how stereotypes about workers' social attributes influence how employers and consumers conceptualize notions of "in/appropriate" workplace subjectivities (McDowell et al., 2007; McDowell, 2015; Liang, 2011; Huang et al., 2012; Dyer et al., 2008). Idealized workplace performances *come into being* through workers', consumers', managers' and/or employers' socio-spatial interactions and expectations in the workplace (Moss, 2005; McDowell, 2009). This is particularly relevant in PSW work given the intimate, embodied, and hands-on nature of the job requiring the co-presence of both the worker and the client receiving care. In this context, workplace interactions are shaped by the dynamic social meanings attached to workers' embodied characteristics – such as skin colour, accent, language, age, and so on – which have come to play an important role in constructing notions of 'desirable' or 'appropriate' care along gendered, classed, and racialized lines (Twigg et al., 2011; Dyer et al., 2008; Dodson and Zincavage, 2007; Aronson and Neysmith, 1996; Stiell and England, 1997). On the wider scale of transnational labour migration, state and non-state actors on both ends of the migration process are implicated in constructing notions of 'idealized workers' as they seek to establish the 'comparative advantage' of their workers in the global economy (Guevarra, 2010; Polanco, 2017, 2019).

Scholars have called for greater attention to the ways in which the production of difference "map[s] onto the labour market" (McDowell, 2015, p. 18), including through racialized and feminized patterns of labour market segmentation and the ways in which they are shaped by hierarchies of desirability (McDowell et al., 2007). In line with feminist scholarship that foregrounds the materiality of discourse as a mechanism that regulates the labour market by re/producing workplace identities and hierarchies of desirability (McDowell, 2009; McDowell et al., 2007; Pratt, 2012; Terry, 2014; Stiell and England, 1997), this chapter reveals on the dominant discourses that underpin the construction of an appropriate/desirable PSW subjectivity, and how these discourses converge with notions of 'Filipina-ness'. To that end, I employ embodiment and interpellation as analytical frameworks to explore how Filipina PSWs negotiate their identities as care workers in

relation to these converging discourses, examining whether these discursive encounters shape their transitions into PSW work.

This chapter contributes to existing scholarship about the discursive and institutional mechanisms through which Filipina migrant women have been constructed as 'natural' caregivers (Rodriguez, 2010; Guevarra, 2010; Lindio-McGovern, 2012; Kelly and D'Addario, 2007; Polanco, 2019) by focusing specifically on the PSW labour market. I begin by discussing the discourses that shape how PSW educators and Filipina PSWs themselves conceptualize an appropriate and desirable PSW subjectivity, calling attention to the ways in which this line of work is understood as a vocation reliant on compassionate, self-sacrificial, and deferent subjectivities. Furthermore, I elucidate how these tropes are underpinned by uneven power relationships of quasi-familial attachments in ways that mirror the labour relations produced through the live-in arrangements of Canada's caregiver programs. The second section of this chapter discusses how notions of 'Filipina-ness' overlap with the traits of a desirable PSW, discursively framing Filipina women as 'naturally' suited for PSW roles. Here, I discuss the varied ways that Filipina PSWs conformed to or challenged these tropes, and how the valorization of Filipina PSWs was articulated relationally through the devaluation of other racialized female PSWs – more specifically, Black women PSWs from African and Caribbean countries. Throughout, I aim to illustrate how these discursive geographies (Pratt, 1999) are entangled in structural processes of differential inclusion and labour migration that regulate the labour market in ways that might constitute a transition from live-in caregiving work to PSW work.

6.2. Dominant PSW subjectivities

6.2.1. PSW work as a vocational calling: perspectives from PSW educators

A recurring theme that emerged within my interviews was the perception that an appropriate and desirable PSW subjectivity is underpinned by embodied performances of compassion. The PSW educators I interviewed described a compassionate disposition as the most important attribute a PSW should possess given the intimate, relational, and hands-on nature of PSW work (Bauer and Österle, 2013; Twigg et al., 2011; Eckenwiler, 2012). Bonnie, a PSW program coordinator at a community college (CC) and a Filipina nurse herself, discussed how a PSW's capacity to 'love' people enables them to be more attentive to the care and assistance needs of their clients:

> You have to love people. You have to care and be patient. Whether it's a resident in a retirement home, whether it's a client in the community or whether it's a patient in the

> hospital, these individuals have medical needs, individuals that are not able to do their activities of daily living and they need assistance. Sometimes you just have to extend your patience because they need the time, and it's one-on-one. (Interview, 'Bonnie', CC-Program Coordinator and Faculty Member, Filipina staff member)

This was reaffirmed by Danica, the Executive Director of a PSW private career college (PCC) and a Filipina woman herself, who framed compassion as a distinct, yet fundamental component of the technical and physical tasks of caring labour, such as food preparation and mobility support. Without this, she stated how the relationality of care becomes eroded and rendered 'mechanical':

> I've always said from day one to anyone that takes the [PSW] course, there are things that you need to walk in with that I can't teach you. I can teach you the technical stuff, like [how to] transfer from bed to wheelchair, like food, you know, preparing food. But I can't teach you compassion and kindness – that you have to walk in with. And that is, really, to me, the most important trait of a PSW. Because if you don't have kindness and compassion, how do you take care of someone, you know? Because if that's what it is, then you're just mechanical. (Interview, 'Danica', PCC Executive Director, Filipina, Toronto, 2023).

Sarah, a faculty member at a community college (CC) PSW program in the GTA and a non-Filipina woman (White), shared similar sentiments, framing PSW as a 'profession' that relies upon a worker's inherent sense of care, compassion, and empathy:

> The fact that, you know, it is a profession, and as such, you need to possess certain qualities or characteristics. We talk a lot about compassion. We talk a lot about empathy and caring. And I always say to my students, look, I can give you a definition of empathy, I can teach you what it is, but I cannot instill it in you. And I would hope that given the fact that you are going to be working primarily with a vulnerable population, that you are a caring, compassionate, empathetic person. Because if you're not, it really is not for you. (Interview, 'Sarah', CC Faculty Member, non-Filipina, Toronto, 2023)

Their comments position a compassionate disposition as the crux of an idealized PSW subjectivity *and* as something that should come 'naturally' to the PSW. The belief that the ability to appropriately perform this work was pre-determined by a worker's inherent temperaments was reinforced through comments that suggested "not everyone should be a PSW" (Interview, 'Danica', PCC Executive Director, Filipina, 2023). This perspective discursively frames PSW work as a vocational career, gesturing towards a normative assumption that those who pursue careers as PSWs do so in response to an intrinsic and "overwhelming drive to 'care' for people" (Bolton, 2005, p. 173, cited in Dyer et al., 2008, p. 2031). To emphasize this, Sarah described the potential discrepancy between classroom performance and workplace performance, noting that in her experience, high grades were not clear indicators for measuring a PSW student's marketability as candidates in the labour market. Instead, she pointed to the importance of 'soft skills' – in this

case, embodying compassion, patience, kindness and empathy – as the key becoming the 'best PSW':

> Yeah, you know, simply because somebody is a good student, an 'A' student, does not necessarily mean that they're going to be a good PSW. So, there's definitely not a positive correlation between being an 'A' student and being an excellent PSW. Sometimes my average students, who possess all the soft skills that employers are looking for, sometimes they make the best PSWs. (Interview, 'Sarah', CC Faculty Member, non-Filipina, Toronto, 2023)

Her point that employers pay more attention to a worker's embodied soft skills indicates the centrality of embodied emotional labour in conceptualizing an appropriate and idealized PSW subjectivity. Although the PSW educators did not use the language of emotional labour, their comments indicate an existing, perhaps dominant ethos that valorizes 'emotional connections as a central part of the service exchange' (McDowell, 2009, p. 50). This is reinforced in Danica's comments about PSW work as the ideal career for those looking to commodify their capacity to care for others. From her perspective, those who remained in the PSW sector over the long-term were likely those who had prior experience performing unpaid caregiving labour, such as caring for elderly family members. It is through these experiences, she notes, that potential PSWs realize their marketability:

> If you're doing it for the money, you won't last. The people that last are the ones that did it for free, who began and thought, 'oh my God, you can get paid for this.' So, they come in, they do it, they take the program, and they start making money. And a lot of it too is people who took care of their grandparents or their parents and loved it, so they want to do it. (Interview, 'Danica', PCC Executive Director, Filipina staff member, Toronto, 2023).

Danica's choice to sometimes interview prospective students doubled down on the notion that PSW work relies on an inherent and embodied subjectivity. Although interviews were not formally required in the admission process of her school, using gatekeeping strategies like informal interviews enabled her and her staff to protect the integrity of her school by preventing those who lacked the 'right' fit from entering the PSW labour market:

> Danica: I've refused people.
>
> NP: Is there an interview component?
>
> Danica: Not always, because I'm not always here. But I tell my staff to check it out. Because it hurts my school if I train someone that is going to walk around with my certificate and they're not good PSW... I'm not the type of person that just, 'you got the money, I'll train you'. You know, like to me, I've refused because it's dangerous for them to go work. Like,

> with nursing homes, people are supervising you. If they got a job in a private care, no one's in the room with them. I don't want to feel like I gave someone, you know, a certificate so they can go and not do the best for a client. So, that's something I really, really, look for and advocate about, like I don't train just anybody because like I said not everyone should be a PSW. (Interview, 'Danica', PCC Executive Director, Filipina staff member, Toronto, 2023).

6.2.2. The uneven power dynamics of quasi-familial attachments

In addition to a natural compassionate disposition, the PSW educators I interviewed also described the 'ideal' PSW as someone that could slip into familial modes of relating to their clients, their clients' families, and their employers, at any given moment. These expectations were implied in the following excerpt from my interview with Bonnie, who seemed to suggest that the well-being of the care-receiver must take precedence over the needs of the worker, no matter what:

> I always say put yourself in the shoes of the resident. Would you want to be woken up at 6 o'clock when you're really just so sleepy just to be pushed into getting your sponge bath and be changed and be wheeled into the dining room? No, you don't want to. So, there's always that conversation. You really need to love people, love your job, you wake up in the morning and say 'Yay! I'm a PSW! I'm going to my residents now, I'm going to meet Mr. Smith or Mrs. Brown, and this is my care plan, and I know them … If I'm the resident, I don't want to hear that you're short staffed, it's all about me. "This is my time with you, and I need to have my shower with you. You need to let me choose the clothes that I want to wear for today. You're not choosing it for me," you know what I mean? You really have to have that patience and dedication in your work to love your job and it makes your life much easier. Otherwise, you'll be miserable every day or every time you come to work. (Interview, 'Bonnie', CC Program Coordinator and Faculty Member, Filipina, Toronto, 2023)

Bonnie reiterated that each resident is deserving of personalized care, regardless of how unmanageable working conditions might be:

> Yup, you really have to care and you really have to love people because it's people that you're looking after. You have to love people, you have to have patience, you have to be caring when you provide the care. You can't just be rushing them or pulling them, 'I have like 10 residents I have to look after I don't have time for you, I have to do it quick.' You cannot do that. Each resident is special, each resident deserves the time that you have to spend with them. (Interview, 'Bonnie', CC Program Coordinator and Faculty Member, Filipina, Toronto, 2023)

Bonnie's comments about cultivating relations of care are arguably one-sided; PSWs are expected to embody the role of the deferent caretaker and a sense of quasi-familial companionship, yet there is no expectation nor requirement that clients in their care return this dynamic to the worker. Not only does this devalue the emotional labour involved in care work (Dyer et al., 2008; England and Dyck, 2011), but it is also eerily similar to discourses that underpinned the labour relations of live-in caregivers in Canada. Scholarship on the emotional dimensions of waged social

reproductive labour, particularly that which is performed by migrant caregivers, argues that paid care relations are shaped by ideologies of intimacy, family, and maternalism, which has the effect of positioning non-family care workers in quasi-familial relationships to their clients (Stiell and England, 1997; Romero, 2002). Here, the quasi-familial arrangement serves as a mechanism of labour control, as workers are expected to perform and provide intimate familial care labour for their employer as a "labour of love" regardless of the circumstances (Stiell and England, 1997, p. 341). As discussed in Chapter 5, the valorization of familial attachments between the caregiver and their employer obscures the class differences and relations of dependency between the paid employee and the employer. This argument is not meant to dismiss the existence of genuine care relations between a worker and their employer; rather, I make these points to highlight how asymmetrical power dynamics within labour relations can hinder reciprocal exchanges of love and care (Pratt, 2012; Romero, 2002).

Nevertheless, the emotional labour that PSWs perform are understood to be a fundamental component of the overall wellness of not just their clients, but also their clients' family members. Providing emotional and social support to a client's family is a task that exists outside a PSW's formal job requirements, and yet the ability of a PSW to embody this role was seen as a measurement of their quality as workers. The following quote from Sarah elucidates this by emphasizing the role that PSWs play in 'providing respite' to families and maintaining the mental health of their clients – both of which point to the centrality of emotional labour in embodying an appropriate PSW subjectivity:

> Many come into the program aware that PSWs provide personal care, but I say, you know, it goes beyond that. You provide respite to families. You provide social and emotional support. And providing an elderly person with social and emotional support is as important as the personal care that you provide. Because social and emotional support can go a long way to offset things like loneliness and depression. And suicide in the elderly population is something that's not really talked about a lot. You know, and mental health. So, you know, we talk a lot about that as well … in nursing, we talk about a holistic approach to care; you're not just interested in the person's physical well-being, but their social, emotional, intellectual, and their spiritual well-being. And that's kind of what I teach in our program, all aspects of the person are important. (Interview, 'Sarah', Faculty Member, non-Filipina, Toronto, 2023).

What emerges from the excerpts shared thus far are the ways in which notions of the 'ideal PSW' are produced in tandem with moral assessments of a worker's emotional engagement with their clients, a measurement of their compassionate dispositions, and their willingness to sacrifice themselves for the sake of their clients. In fact, Danica suggested that the level of a PSW's grief

when providing end-of-life care can indicate the depth of their compassionate disposition. She recounted an incident where a Filipina PSW she matched to an employer experienced an intense wave of grief upon hearing the news that a palliative client of hers passed away, which caused her to take time off work:

> I had one PSW. She was taking care of one of our clients, but who was young. She was in her late thirties, who had cancer and passed. And she [the PSW] couldn't work. She literally took three months off to recover from it. It's a long time. It messed her up. Like, she was so distraught and grieving. This woman, and she only worked with [the client] for I think, three months, but because they connected in an emotional way. Like when I called her to tell her that she had passed, she literally screamed and, and I guess she dropped her phone and I could hear her sobbing, she was saying, no, no, no, like stuff like that. I was like, oh my God, like, that's a reaction of someone that wasn't related to her, you know. (Interview, 'Danica', PCC Executive Director, Filipina staff member, Toronto, 2023).

Although she acknowledged the emotional toll of this work, she continued by discussing how eager she was to match this PSW to another client – notably, a friend of hers that was seeking a PSW for her elderly father – as soon as the PSW recovered from her grief:

> I told my girlfriend, who was looking for a PSW, I said, 'when she gets over her grief, this is the PSW. Because this girl will take care of your father.' Like it hurts, you know? The emotion she felt; and when she gives, she gives it. Like she will devote herself to your parent or whoever. So then, when she was ready to work, she called me up and I said, I have a family for you. And she went and interviewed, and they loved her. Well, my girlfriend was like, 'I don't know, there could be a language thing.' I'm like, 'trust me.' Now, they can't live without her. The father recognizes her now. And I told [her], you've got a PSW till the end. (Interview, 'Danica', PCC Executive Director, Filipina staff member, Toronto, 2023)

These quotes reveal the uneven power dynamics that are embedded in the expectation *and* interpellation of the idealized PSW subjectivity, where workers are expected to embody intimate and familial relations of compassion, sometimes at the expense of their own physical and emotional well-being. Not only does this reflect the commodification of caring labour, but celebrating a PSW's emotional devotion and resilience by valorizing the depth of grief can run the risk of romanticizing and normalizing self-sacrificial temperaments, where self-sacrifice is not only idealized but also treated as an integral component of a PSW's labour.

When PSWs do not perform the role of the compassionate caretaker or family member, they are described as uncaring 'robots in a factory'. The following quote from Bonnie illustrates these expectations in the LTC context; on one hand, her point problematizes the high workloads of PSWs in institutional settings like LTC, but on the other, she simultaneously suggests that PSWs have no excuse for not being able to provide care:

> I was doing a clinical placement with nursing students in long-term care, and I could see PSWs there, I'm telling you, 10-14 depending on which unit, and they have like 4-5 total care, and I was like, how can you do that? They're like, robots in a factory doing all this lines of residents and they look so, it just looks like there's not a care. Although some of them are really exceptional, but for the majority of them, they just want to get it done. Like by 2 o'clock they want to make sure everything is done because they still have to do their charting and all that, and I really see that that's why people don't want to go to long-term care, because long-term care has this bad stink of reputation that, you're there to just rot, you know, there's no quality. Which is wrong. There are amazing personal support workers that have great relationships with their residents and it's just wrong. (Interview, 'Bonnie', CC Program Coordinator and Faculty Member, Filipina, Toronto, 2023)

While the material implications might vary across workplace settings, critically analyzing Bonnie's reflections reveals how the valorization of emotional labour ignores some of the structural challenges that PSWs encounter on the job. In the following section, I will explore how Filipina PSWs themselves engage with these idealized expectations.

6.2.3. Interpellation at work? Perspectives of Filipina PSWs

Like the PSW educators I interviewed, the Filipina PSWs I spoke with commonly articulated an intrinsic sense of compassion as the most important trait that a PSW should possess, and because of this, not everyone should pursue this line of work. Whereas PSW educators emphasized the relationality of compassion within the embodied performance of caring labour, Filipina PSWs' sentiments highlighted compassion and patience as the traits that enabled them to cope with the challenges they experienced on the job. For example, Maris' discussion of compassion pointed to the ways in which embodying a compassionate subjectivity in her work as a LTC PSW enabled her to make sense of the expectations that were placed on her by clients, their families, and management. She explained how her ability to care for her residents is temporally and spatially constrained by her workplace demands as well as her own physical and bodily limitations, illustrating how the affective and bodily nature of care needs are temporally misaligned with the logics of economic rationalization that constitute restructured eldercare in Ontario (Molinari and Pratt, 2021; England, 2010: Lynch, 2022; Fraser, 2016):

> Compassion. Number one is really compassion, because if you don't have that compassion, the job is very, very, very, very physical. That job is not for everyone … [And] there are some families and even residents that because it's your job, they expect more than what you can, forgetting that your body has limitations. … because [residents are] expecting more than what a certain staff can give considering the limitations - not only physical limitations, but the time - you have to manage your time. (Interview, 'Maris', LTC PSW, Toronto, 2023).

Although she concurred with the PSW educators' points about the importance of compassion, her story underscores the spatial and temporal constraints that shape how relations and acts of care are constituted within particular workplace contexts. She elaborated on this point by discussing the lack of supplies and unmanageable workloads she must navigate to meet her residents' needs. Her comments point to the strategic thinking and technical skills that are required for this line of work in the face of structural workplace inequalities, which are arguably obscured when valorizing the emotional labour of PSW work:

> Until now, supply is an issue. Like, you want to take care of 9 residents, and you were given four towels. What are you gonna do? So you have to be resourceful, you have to use paper towels, you have to be resourceful, which residents you're just gonna use face cloths .... You have to know your residents, which ones you're gonna need more time, and then you have to make some residents will be able to do themselves, so you have to encourage them to have their independence, continue to let them do their independence because they can still help themselves, and focus on the ones that really, really need your help. You cannot handle everything. You can't. (Interview, 'Maris', LTC PSW, Toronto, 2023)

At the most intense level, the Filipina PSWs I interviewed shared the emotional toll of providing end-of-life care, particularly when faced with the unexpected passing of a client. Compassionate subjectivities often fostered the development of emotional connections and familial attachments between PSWs and their clients, and because the main clientele of the Filipina PSWs I interviewed were elderly populations, experiencing the passing of clients they cared about was a common experience that caused emotional distress on the job. Goldie summarized this challenging, yet crucial aspect of her line of work as a PSW in LTC, where caring for elderly residents nearing the end of their lives is simply a part of the job. She invokes compassion as a necessity, given this context:

> I would say to do the job itself is very hard already and that is the reason why I don't think everybody could be a PSW. 'Cause like, one thing that I had is that you have to be compassionate. You have to be compassionate and just be kind, always be kind. Because you know what? When you become a PSW, especially for me 'cause I work in the long term care, it's the ending of life. People that go there that's the last stop for them. It's the end of their life. So, taking care of someone who is ending their life is not easy. It's not easy. It's not an easy task. that's when the behaviour comes and everything. But, their ending of life anyway they're not going to stay here forever. Yeah. So, be kind and be compassionate. (Interview, 'Goldie, HC and LTC PSW, Grimsby, 2023).

Similarly, Gabrielle described how providing compassionate care to her clients with poor prognoses at the hospital where she works was a source of pride as it made her work feel much more meaningful and fulfilling. However, she held this in tension with the pain she felt when a

client of hers would pass away as she had difficulty setting boundaries to safeguard herself from feelings of sadness and loss under these circumstances. In the following excerpt, she even suggested that the emotional labour of managing the relationality of compassion, especially in circumstances where death might be imminent, were more difficult than the physical duties of the job:

> Because it's more emotionally, like, I know it's physically but more emotionally, you will be attached to the patient. You know they are all, old and sick, they're going down … It's scary sometimes, you don't want sometimes to be close to someone … and you will get along with the family and the patients, and when they pass, when they go, it's very hard. The first month I was here and there's someone pass away, it makes me like, it's not stress, it seems like I'm so like, like, very sad. And I was like telling to myself, I will not be too close anymore to the patient. I will not make, like, expect about their health gonna be okay. Because it makes me hope, because the first time they are going, like, they're okay. And suddenly you see them dying very quick. It's so hard. (Interview, 'Gabrielle', Hospital PSW, Toronto, 2023).

The challenging entanglement of compassion and grief were also part of Lynn's experience as a HC PSW. Similar to Goldie and reminiscent of Danica's story about a grief-stricken PSW, Lynn described how the untimely deaths of her clients at the start of her PSW career prompted her to stop working for a period of time:

> Most of my clients when I was just starting, after 6 months, they just died. So there was a point in time when I already had, I think four clients and 6 months after, one at a time, I worked 6 months, and after 6 months they die. So I have this thought, 'oh if I find another senior, they might die after 6 months.' So at one point, I stopped working as a caregiver [PSW], but then lately I went back again. (Interview, 'Lynn', LTC PSW, Toronto, 2023)

Despite the emotional toll of this work, many of the Filipina PSWs I interviewed internalized this emotional exhaustion as simply part of the job, and managing one's emotions in relation to their clients was something they were expected to do in order to provide care – even in experiences of aggression or abuse. For example, Lynn attributed the mistreatment and disrespect she has experienced on the job to the fact that seniors are human and may lash out, just like any other person. However, she also recognized the expectation to be deferent to her client given her subordinated role as a PSW employee, which discouraged her from speaking out in times where she experienced aggression from her clients:

> Like, you just have to be nice to them, although there will be times that they are like, they're being aggressive or irritable. Just ignore it. Just be concerned about their side for as long as they will not hurt you, it will not matter. There are some, they are really like, in a different mood, yeah. If that happens, because it's not always that seniors are in good moods. Sometimes it happens they are in bad moods, then just adjust to it. I don't take it

> personally. So, it would be not a problem. It will not become a problem between you and your client if you just ignore it. Don't take it personally. Your client will always be the boss, right. That's how I see to it. Even though they're not always right, you just ignore it, right. (Interview, 'Lynn', HC PSW, Toronto, 2023).

Maris shared a similar point, acknowledging that while workplace abuse does happen against residents, it occurs against PSWs themselves too:

> But sometimes, not all, but some residents say there is some abuse with the residents and stuff. But if you can be in the [LTC] facility working already, you can say that sometimes it's the other way around. It's the residents that sometimes treat you like that. (Interview, 'Maris', LTC PSW, Toronto, 2023)

Their stories seem to indicate that accepting, yet also ignoring, problematic behaviour from clients is expected of PSWs, as clients come to expect deference and compassion as a non-negotiable aspect of the service they are purchasing.

Taken together, the women's experiences illustrate their awareness and internalization of a dominant workplace culture that places substantial importance on embodying a compassionate disposition in their roles as PSWs. It is important to note that caring for vulnerable populations is a serious task, especially since many clients may be unwell, nearing the end of life, or in need of complete assistance with daily activities. Indeed, many of the PSWs I interviewed were aware of their contributions to the Canadian healthcare system and took pride in being able to care for others in need:

> At the end of the day, you're gonna go home, and the long day is over, and I'm very proud to myself that oh yeah, one day is over. Because going to work is very challenging, facing those activities that you have to do with your residents and everything, it's quite challenging I would say. It's very physical also because some residents they use like lifts and some of them they have a very stiff body and everything, you have to think it's like, okay, what to do with this one and everything. Well, you know it's like physical and mental works. But at the end of the day, you made it, and everything is right. (Interview, 'Goldie', HC and LTC PSW, Grimsby, 2023).

Some also discussed how embodying the compassionate PSW subjectivity was something that came naturally and willingly, given the human capacity and desire to care for others:

> I think it's the same thing, like when we're talking about the jobs of the caregivers and the PSWs, the amount of, I think it's not just care it's just like instilled in our core, as a person who cares for other people, I think it's a big thing. It's not just because you wanted to be known for what we're doing or we wanted to be appreciated, we wanted to be compensated, but it's something that is already in us. (Interview, 'Julia', community informant and former caregiver, GTA, 2023).

However, dominant discourses that valorize a PSW's ability to disregard their own needs and endure challenging work conditions not only overlooks the PSW's welfare but also obscures the spatial and temporal inequities that shape their ability to do their work. Thus, the point I wish to underscore is how the job itself is conceptualized as requiring vast reserves of a particular compassionate and deferential disposition, which subsequently raises questions around *who*, how, and why some are understood to fit the desirable criteria.

The women navigated these expectations and 'interpellations' in multiple and ambivalent ways – sometimes accepting the interpellated 'call' to be deferent to their clients' and employers' wishes, and at other times, setting firm boundaries around *how* they embodied compassion as a strategy of self-perseverance in the face of emotional and physical exhaustion. My point is not to suggest that PSWs should not foster genuine affective care relations with those they care for, nor do I mean to suggest that they resent the high degree of compassion they are expected to give to their clients. Rather, approaching this phenomenon through the lens of interpellation highlights the complex, sometimes contradictory, but active ways in which Filipina PSWs negotiate their roles.

Questions about processes of embodiment still remain. What are the embodied characteristics that signify the idealized PSW subjectivity? Furthermore, how do Filipina former caregivers who have transitioned into PSW roles engage with these discursive subjectivities? In what ways have gendered notions of 'Filipino-ness' come to be seen as consistent with the idealized PSW subjectivity? The following section will explore these questions in more depth to understand the racialization of the appropriate PSW subjectivity.

6.3. "Being Filipina is a very, very big asset"

6.3.1. Overlapping subjectivities? PSW educators on the construction of the 'ideal' PSW and notions of "Filipina-ness"

The PSW educators I spoke to described compassion as an intrinsic aspect of Filipino identity, calling attention to cultural values of familial dedication and religious altruism. Bonnie and Danica, both of whom are Filipina women, discussed how caring for elderly family members is a family responsibility and cultural value they believe significantly influences how Filipino PSWs embody their work. This was clearly stated by Bonnie: "We don't place them [elderly family members] in the home, we look after them. I think that resonates into how the PSW are in the program and when they go into LTC, they provide the same care that they were brought up to." (Interview, 'Bonnie', Program Coordinator/Faculty Member, CC, Toronto, 2023). She continued by

explaining how the cultural importance of family makes Filipino students well-primed to embody the ideal PSW subjectivity by caring for their clients as if they were family:

> Filipino students, we have been brought up to look after our elderly, right? We have extended family back home, there's no such thing as nursing home in the Philippines. I don't know now if there are, but I have my grandparents living with us until they die. So, we have extended family, we look after our elderly. We do not send our elderly somewhere else. They live with a daughter or somebody else, and they get looked after. So, that is one trait, one characteristic, one upbringing that Filipinos have that makes them excel as well in their placements because, you know we see elderly as our own, right? Like when I see an elderly, they remind me of my grandparents, and when I see them struggling to walk, it's just an instinct to go "can I help you, can I assist you?" And I see that in the Filipino students that I have had the privilege to supervise in their clinical placements. (Interview, 'Bonnie', Program Coordinator/Faculty Member, CC, Toronto, 2023).

Danica shared similar sentiments, commenting on the rarity of seeing Filipino seniors living in long-term care homes as an indication of the cultural expectation that eldercare remains the duty of the family. She related this to her own experience as a Filipina woman committed to caring for her elderly father within her household:

> Well, it just tells you, like the Filipino, you don't see Filipino nursing homes. Like, you never see Filipinos in a nursing home … they stay with us. You know, my dad's gonna stay with me forever. Like, I'll have to hire a PSW over here. I promised him. He goes back and forth from here to the Philippines. But he made me promise him, when he can't go back and forth anymore, he's not coming back here. He's not going there [a nursing home]. (Interview, 'Danica', Executive Director of a PCC, Toronto, 2023).

On the other hand, Sarah hesitated to make comments about an essentialized Filipino identity or culture – perhaps influenced by her positionality as a White woman and my positionality as a Filipina woman. However, her comments reflected Danica's and Bonnie's points about how Filipino cultural values of family and religion inform the way Filipina PSWs embody their work, referencing her experiences with Filipino students to support her perspective. Like Danica and Bonnie, her remarks reinforce a stereotypical portrayal of Filipinos as altruistic and family-oriented – qualities that are often cited to explain the overrepresentation of Filipinos in healthcare occupations:

> I don't want to stereotype so I want to be careful. But I do find, and, and correct me if I'm wrong, and maybe I'm making an assumption, but I find my Filipino students to be very family oriented. I think they naturally come to caregiving, whether that's as a PSW or in nursing. They're drawn to those professions. I believe it's their value system. A lot of my Filipino students say "health is wealth". They would put being healthy above and beyond any amount of money that they would have, the importance of health and wellbeing.

> I believe it has to be culture. You know, I don't know if religion plays a part in it or not. I would assume that a lot of Filipinos are Catholics. And, you know, I myself was raised as a Catholic, and so, you're taught about giving back, and community, and compassion, and caring for one another. And that's instilled in you from a very young age. But again, I don't want to generalize about a particular cultural group, but perhaps those are some of the things that I have noticed. (Interview, 'Sarah', Faculty Member, Community College, Toronto, 2023).

Even so, Sarah also discussed how the phenomenon of caring for elderly family members was not limited to Filipino students but was common among international students of different ethnic background:

> Not even just my Filipino [students], a lot of my international students, they're shocked when they go into clinical in second semester. You know, and we had this conversation last year. It's just not done in many of these cultures. You do not institutionalize your elderly. You keep your elderly at home, and you do everything in your power to make sure that they stay home, that they are not institutionalized. A lot of my international students are quite shocked in that, in their first clinical to see. It's sad, the warehousing of our elderly really, you know? (Interview, 'Sarah', Faculty Member, Community College, Toronto, 2023).

The discourses of altruism, religion, and familial devotion that underpin the familial responsibility for elder care in Filipino families – and relatedly in the context of this research, the valorization of a 'naturally' compassionate PSW – have gendered dimensions and implications. This is evident in Danica's reflections that likened the willingness of Filipina women to sacrifice themselves in their PSW jobs to the sacrifice of leaving their children and spouses behind in the Philippines to work abroad as caregivers, illustrating how the gendered dimensions that underpin the transnational division of reproductive labour are reproduced and restructured in different waged labour contexts (Parreñas, 2003). Her comments also reflect the gendering of transnational labour migration in the Philippines, with Filipina women working in the traditionally feminized sectors of domestic work and caregiving and Filipina men working in predominantly masculinized and physical sectors of seafaring:

> I don't know any other culture that does that, you know, that leaves their children, and that it's the woman too, and not the man. But I guess it's because of the Live-in Caregiver Program, right? Like, it's just the woman's more viable for the job. Like, I don't see a lot of that. Although I do know some families, as I said, you know, their husbands were fishermen and they went out and they would be gone for ten months. But mainly women. (Interview, 'Danica', PCC Executive Director, Toronto, 2023).

She continued by sharing a story about one of her students who obtained her PSW certification while taking on informal cleaning and nannying jobs after completing the LCP. Danica recounted how this caregiver immigrant's transition into PSW work is what enabled her to sponsor her family's

migration to Canada and live a comfortable lifestyle in a way that surpassed Canadian-born residents. Although this student's upward mobility was partly a result of transitioning from informal cleaning and nannying jobs to a relatively stable PSW position, Danica emphasized the resilience and determination of Filipina women to sacrifice and do whatever it takes as a culturally distinctive and gendered explanation, which manifested in working "shit" jobs to ensure the well-being of the family:

> I've seen this woman, like I had a student. Greece, she came from Greece. Came here, she got sponsored by a family. She's Filipina and I saw her graduate and she brought her family over. She had one daughter when they first came over and she was little when she left and now she has four kids. She bought her first apartment. She's only lived here for, I think her husband's been here for four years. She bought a condo, she's saving for a car, her kids are healthy, happy. She has twins too, that's how she got four.
>
> And I know people that are born and raised here and like, educated here who are on welfare. And Ontario, like, live in Ontario housing. And they had all the opportunity in the world. *But then here are these new immigrants that scrape and do the shit jobs*, they'll clean. You know, and, I mean, she doesn't clean anymore. But she had to do what she had to do. And that's the difference. And Filipino women, Filipinos period, sacrifice. And they will work whatever job. They don't care. There's no pride. Not like, not pride, of course they have pride. They just don't have, they'll do whatever it takes. To get their family here and to help their family. And not a lot of cultures are like that. A lot of cultures are in it for themselves. Filipinos are not. (Interview, 'Danica', Executive Director, PCC, Toronto, 2023).

On one hand, highlighting Filipina women's sacrifices, humility, and willingness to do "whatever job" necessary to facilitate socioeconomic stability for themselves and their families illuminates the diverse strategies in which Filipina migrant women engage when transitioning out of the caregiver program. On the other hand, however, this narrative also normalizes the labour market marginalization that caregiver immigrants experience by presenting an idealized and gendered portrayal of resilience and sacrifice. Here, the racialized and gendered moral economy of transnational labour migration (Guevarra, 2010, 2022) is reproduced vis-à-vis discourses that frame Filipina women as naturally embodying the traits of an ideal PSW. As Guevarra notes, the duty to "embody an ethic of responsibility toward their families and nation" is sustained and rendered "hypervisible" through discursive representations of Filipina women as the embodiment of specific qualities that make them the ideal care worker (Guevarra, 2022, p. 140). These discourses are re-worked within the PSW sector by way of the 'self-sacrificial' and 'humble' portrayal of Filipina PSWs.

6.3.2. “The care that we give is not like my other co-workers”: Insights from Filipina PSWs

Many of the Filipina PSWs I spoke with viewed the association between Filipina identities and PSW subjectivities as a positive phenomenon. For example, Maris believed that being Filipina is an “asset” due to her cultural values of hard work, compassion, and care, which she presents as a normative fact: “Being a Filipina is a very, very big asset because it’s known to every most people that is sane with good mind that Filipinos are very compassionate. Very respectable. Hardworking.” (Interview, ‘Maris’, LTC PSW, Toronto, 2023). Similarly, Gillian differentiated Filipina PSWs from PSWs of other nationalities through the lens of Filipina women’s culturally ‘distinct’ form of compassion:

> The care that we give is really different on how my other co-workers give the care. Because for us, I think it's already in our nature that when you see a person like really hard working. We always help. We always care. It's just like, we feel guilty if we don't give the proper care to that person. Unlike for other nationalities, it's all about work: ‘That's my job. I finish, that's it. That's all I can give.’ But for us, we go far and beyond. (Interview, ‘Gillian’, HC and LTC PSW, Toronto, 2023).

The sense that Filipino people, and Filipina women in particular, possess a distinct capacity for care work was articulated by Claire as a source of pride. She described the happiness she feels when guests at the hotel where she worked would associate her Filipina identity with being a nurse, especially if those guests described having a Filipina caregiver in their lives:

> Sometimes, I talk to guests in the hotel and they asked me, how did I get here? They asked my nationality. They guessed Japanese, Korean, Chinese. I was like, I'm Filipino. And then whenever I say I'm Filipino, they were like, oh, you're good at caring. You're good at nursing. And we are so famous of being, you know, being caregiver. Sometimes ... they said a Filipina took care of their parents, a Filipina took care of their baby. And I am so, you know, I'm so happy to hear that. And I'm so proud to be a Filipino because everyone's, you know, when you say Filipino, they will say, oh, giving care, giving love to their loved ones, taking care. So I'm so happy to hear and I'm so proud being Filipino. That's not a doubt. (Interview, ‘Claire’, PSW in training, Toronto, 2023).

The positive association between Filipina subjectivities and the traits that comprise an idealized PSW was not universally articulated amongst my participants, however, as some critiqued how the normalization of ‘Filipina compassion’ can discursively limit imaginations of what is or is not appropriate for Filipina women. Julia shared an anecdote about being stereotyped by a bank teller when inquiring about job opportunities, which underscored her critique of how the association between Filipino identity and compassion can result in Filipina women being narrowly viewed as caregivers:

> I remember after I become a permanent resident here, because I used to work at a bank, I asked one teller there, not Filipino, I asked her how can you apply for a position here? You mean in this branch, she asked me. I said yeah. And she asked me, are you a Filipino? And I said, yes, I am. And she said, oh, you Filipino? You're good at being nannies and cleaners so why don't you just apply for those positions? [NP - That is awful]. I know, I don't know how to react. And then after few months I saw two Filipino working there. (Interview, 'Julia', community worker and organizer, Toronto, 2023).

A similar experience happened to Erika, where she was asked by a passerby on the subway if she was a PSW simply because she was Filipina:

> Actually, this is when I was in Toronto in the subway, somebody sitting next to me and she said, 'is you Filipina?' I said, yes. 'So, you're PSW?' Yeah. There's already a stereotype on that. Yeah. And yeah, it's true that every time they see a Filipina, it's either caregiver or PSW. (Interview, 'Erika', Toronto, 2023).

Erika and Julia's experiences foreground how stereotypes are present and emerge in everyday interactions, resulting in the *racial formation* of Filipina women as 'natural caregivers' (Omi and Winant, 2014). As 'racial projects – that is, the "interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial identities and meanings, and an effort to organize and distribute resources along particular racial lines" – these stereotypes reflect how dominant cultural discourses that represent Filipina women as 'ideal caregivers' are embedded in labour market processes (Omi and Winant, 2014, p. 126). These racial projects naturalize the position of Filipina women in caregiving roles, making their attempts to pursue non-care work jobs seem uncharacteristic. As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, racialized and nationalized stereotypes can have far-reaching consequences, impacting Filipina caregiver immigrants' imagination of the educational and occupational opportunities that are accessible to them – which by extension, can shape their socioeconomic mobility.

Thus, stereotypes about Filipina women embodying the traits of an idealized PSW often have ambivalent implications. On one hand, these discourses might privilege Filipina PSWs within the labour market, as employers and clients across different sectors might explicitly look to hire them based on the representation of Filipina women as subservient and deferent. This was something Erika witnessed in her line of work supporting and advocating for migrant caregivers, and although her comments point to the position of Filipina PSWs at the 'top' of a racialized hierarchy of workers, she also discussed how internalizing these stereotypical tropes can be harmful to Filipina PSWs themselves:

> Erika: They actually request for Filipina, especially, the PSWs working in community. So, this is the difference. When you're working in the facility, you work inside the facility with other PSWs. There are PSWs working in a community wherein they can come, they can visit

> the client either in the morning or in the afternoon. What they do is to visit, and you sit down and talk to them and help them. Life works, you know? But the PSW Filipina? It's different. This is the difference: when they come, even if laundry is not part of their job, right? But Filipina, they do extra. They go, you know, one more mile for, for the patient. If they see that they need to, there's so many dishes, they clean up, they wash them. If they see laundry, the clothes and the client would say, Oh, that's not your job. 'It's okay. I have two hours to do.' That's the difference between the Filipina and the other PSWs. That's why most of this wants to hire Filipina PSW.
>
> NP: Would you say that's a negative sort of thing?
>
> Erika: For me, it's negative, because you're not supposed to do, you're supposed to do the job that is within the guidelines. But you know, Filipino, they said, it's not gonna hurt me. You know? Yeah. It's not gonna hurt you, but it's gonna hurt other PSWs outside, but this is what they do. They said it's not gonna hurt me. It's gonna, you know, and then it builds it. It builds relationship also with the clients and these clients would tell other elderly, you know, other seniors, or you should hire this, and you should call the organization and make sure that you get this Filipina.

Her critique of the 'compassionate Filipina' links the exploitation of Filipina PSWs to the exploitation they experienced as live-in caregivers. In her experience supporting caregiver migrants, she heard many stories of White Canadian employers seeking out Filipina caregivers explicitly because of this notion that they will be deferential and non-combative. She described how employers would capitalize on the stereotypical assumptions of Filipina women as 'resilient in the face of hardships', especially if they knew the women experienced challenges or abuse prior to their migration to Canada:

> Erika: Well, because, in the Philippines, we have a really hard lives in Philippines, especially, according to study, they said that most caregivers who are coming here are from the outskirts, not from the city, but they're from the outskirts of provinces of Philippines. And they said that these people in the outskirts of Philippine provinces are very submissive or subservient to their husbands or family, or they're very very resilient and strong women and employers capitalize on that. So, they know already the background of the caregiver or if they were, employed outside the Philippines, like Hong Kong, Israel and Saudi Arabia. They capitalize on that also because they know that this caregiver, they had a hard life in their employers and whatever they do, they can, you know, they can stay. They're using that to capitalize, you know?
>
> NP: That's quite malicious.
>
> Erika: It is, it is. And, very abusive. And it's not nice but, employers know the Filipino culture, they know the Filipino women, how they are in their own family, in their own country, and in the second country where they are working. They know already these things, and they capitalize, they use that for their own benefit. (Interview, 'Erika', Toronto, 2023).

These exploitative dynamics were evident in some of Maris' experiences as a PSW. Because of the traits associated with being a "compassionate" Filipina woman, she described how her residents, their families, and her employers were more likely to disrespect her. While she strongly identified with the view that Filipina women *are* inherently compassionate, her irritation at being disrespected illustrates how she did not interpellate this subjectivity passively:

> I'm a Filipino right. By nature I am very compassionate, but the only thing that I come to hate is when you encounter residents that they don't appreciate what you're doing. When there's a - you will understand it if there's a little bit they don't like you, but when you can see there's no respect, then that's a different issue. That's an issue that I think it's difficult to address because it's more personal like you cannot change a person right. (Interview, 'Maris', LTC PSW, Toronto, 2023).

The racialization of Filipina women as simultaneously compassionate yet also docile and obedient was not limited to institutional sectors like LTC but also shaped the experiences of the HC PSWs I interviewed. For example, although she asserted the distinctness of care provided by Filipina PSWs, Gillian described how these discourses also led clients to expect and sometimes demand compliance, even if the tasks they are demanded to perform were outside what they were being paid to do:

> At community, some people say, 'hey, my other Filipina, this Filipina, you clean my house. Vacuum it. Do the flowers, do the dishes.' That's how they say it [because] the other Filipinos [PSWs] do that for them. But when I go to the house, I only follow the curfew, and I don't want it. Because they expect us as Filipinos, we're like, *we're not PSW, we're mixed*. That's how they see us sometimes because we're doing too much for them. (Interview, 'Gillian', HC PSW, Toronto, 2023).

Goldie similarly witnessed and experienced the differential treatment that Filipino PSWs received in the workplace due to racialized stereotypes about Filipino culture and dispositions. She described how residents at the LTC facility where she works explicitly preferred a Filipino PSW named 'Alfred', because he was more likely to go above and beyond in ways that non-Filipino PSWs would not. This story problematizes the valorization of the 'Filipino PSW' subjectivity by demonstrating how these discourses might render Filipino PSWs vulnerable to being taken advantage of without additional compensation or recognition:

> They probably seen like the Filipino PSW are, this is just me saying it. Maybe because they are compassionate and kind, and then as I told you they don't really complain. Yeah. Most of them are very timid also. So, yeah. I remember I had one client before and then he specifically asked, even in the place where I'm working right now, I remember, they will always ask for Alfred. He's a Filipino. He's Filipino and they will just specifically ask, "I want Alfred to come with me. Only Alfred." If Alfred is around, only Alfred. Because if other race

> will go there, they will make an argument with him. And they will argue if like, for example, I would like to, 'can you put lotion on my feet.' They will say 'no, I will not. You can do it, you're still able.' Here, some people they will put the lotion in his hands and he will rub it in himself. But this guy, Alfred, when Tim [the resident] will ask, 'I would like the lotion in my hands,' he will take the lotion and rub it into his hands like no problem. (Interview, 'Goldie, HC and LTC PSW, Grimsby, 2023).

Goldie's story is particularly interesting because it foregrounds a Filipino man embodying the deference associated with an idealized PSW subjectivity, which up until this point, has been deemed a feminized phenomenon associated with traditional notions of womanhood and maternalism. While it is beyond the scope of my work to explore Filipino masculinities and the ways in which they may overlap with a dominant idealized PSW subjectivity, her story about Alfred reveals how idealized stereotypes are racialized to the point that it may also apply to Filipino men. Regardless, she was critical of the ways in which Filipino PSWs, broadly speaking, were deferent to their clients because it might impinge on their client's independence:

> Cause like, for example me, if I see the client is still able to do it, I will let him do it. I just learned when I hear them because I am working with different races, if he is able to do it let him do it. Because it's good for the movement and you're taking that one away from them. But Filipino is like, 'hey, can you wipe my ass' even if he [the client] can do it? 'Oh yeah sure, I will wipe your ass.' It's our culture, we just do it. Well, it's because probably we're colonized by Spaniards for many many years and Spaniards dictate what you do and you're going to do it because why? Because you are their slaves. We're no longer slaves. And then we also being taught like to respect our elderly so much, and we stick into that which is a good thing, but it depends. (Interview, 'Goldie, HC and LTC PSW, Grimsby, 2023).

In making this statement, Goldie underscored how a cultural inclination and interpellation of a deferent disposition amongst Filipinos is intertwined in enduring legacies of colonialism, particularly in shaping the popular belief that Filipinos excel as caregivers (Choy, 2003; Glenn, 1992; Espiritu, 2003).

Taken together, the women's stories illuminate how desires for upward occupational and socio-economic mobility are entangled with their interpellations of the 'idealized PSW' in ambivalent ways. Their critical reflections illustrate how racialized and gendered discourses about Filipina subjectivity are re-worked in the context of the PSW sector in ways that could uplift *and* demean Filipina PSWs on the job. However, they do not always conform to these scripts passively. Their critiques of the dominant portrayal of Filipina women as 'natural caregivers' as it intersects with notions of the ideal PSW elucidates how they resist and renegotiate their subjectivities.

6.3.3. Racialized hierarchies in the PSW labour market

The social construction of Filipina women as embodying the traits of an idealized PSW is a relational process that occurs alongside the devaluation of other racialized immigrant women performing the same work – particularly, Black immigrant women from African and Caribbean countries. Not only did Filipina PSWs portray their care as superior to that of their colleagues from different ethnic backgrounds, but evidence of a racial hierarchy of PSW workers also emerged. In fact, Danica – recall that she also operated a PSW agency alongside her work as the Executive Director of the school – was explicit about the ways in which racial preferences and stereotypes emerged in her experience interfacing with potential clients. Her comments which mirror Erika's points about employers who explicitly desire Filipina caregivers:

> I get a lot of clients, like if they've had a Filipino PSW, they'll say, "I want Filipino. I had one of your graduates. She was Filipino. She was so kind to my mother. She had to leave, but I want another one." And I'll say, well, I have an African, or I have a Middle Eastern, or I have a, whatever. And they said, no, Filipino. I've sent different kinds. I've sent a Filipino girl, and then I send another culture, and then they'll call me and say, please send another Filipino girl. So, after, always preferences. (Interview, 'Danica', PCC Executive Director, Filipina staff member, Toronto, 2023).

Her comments illustrate the embeddedness of racialized notions of care and the production of a racialized hierarchy of desirable workers. Interestingly, too, this hierarchy mirrors shifts in the demand for racialized care labour within the Canadian nation state, from demands for Afro-Caribbean migrant women workers through the FDM, to Filipina women through the LCP and beyond (Tungohan, 2023; Sharma, 2006; Walia, 2020). This was explicitly evident in Danica's experiences with clients that outright refused to hire Black PSWs, which she links to the 'old school', blatantly racist mindset of previous generations:

> So for some reason, Africans and Caribbean, like Jamaican, there is that stereotype, that they're ... But also when you're dealing with elderly, you're dealing with ... they're old school. They still have that, you know. They don't want to hire a Black. I don't know why. And I've talked to them because, I'm telling you, Africans are the new Filipino PSWs. The kindness and compassion, but it's because their accent, it seems angry and they're very, like, it sounds like they're angry, but they're not. It's just their tone and their thing. They, I mean, not all of them. I'm not saying all of them, And definitely the skin color. Like, I feel really bad about it. That's why I send them to long term care, because they'll get hired, you know, but when I'm dealing with private, they don't. Very few. I'd say maybe 10, 15% of the non-Filipinos that I send out, they keep, and they're okay with. And then the others, they're very specific. (Interview, 'Danica', PCC Executive Director, Filipina staff member, Toronto, 2023)

Interestingly, she pushed back against the racialization of African women as 'aggressive' by framing them as the "new Filipino PSWs", which unintentionally reproduced the dynamics of racialization she sought to problematize. Her comments clearly highlighted how the embodied traits of PSWs – in this case, skin colour, accent, and way of speaking – are inscribed with racializing significance for those who are hiring them, especially in the context of home care settings. It is clear that a racial hierarchy is operating in the process of selection and retention of PSWs; while Filipino PSWs seem to be placed near the top of this hierarchy of desirability, the wider process of equating embodied attributes with a capacity to carry out the required work is something that impacts *all* PSWs.

Notions of a racial hierarchy were not limited to employers and elderly clients. Some of the Filipina PSWs I interviewed were apprehensive about disclosing the racial background of their coworkers because they did not want to come across as making racist comments. Even so, when asked about how their co-workers approach their work, their comments reinforced racial stereotypes that coded Black women as aggressive and inferior, while positioning Filipina women as the 'gentle' counterpart:

> So, it must be biased I guess, but there's a big difference of the Filipino culture and maybe the Jamaican or something? I don't know if I'm allowed to say that, but their approach is more on … We are more on, "How are you mama?" And they say, "Okay, hurry up. Get up! It's time for supper." They're more on, it's not rude, but their approach generally I guess even in their family setting is not the same family setting as what is brought up in a Filipino family setting. So once you're in the workforce, you will see the difference. Even if you have a partner, like me, I have a partner of a different culture, you can see how they talk and how they handle the residents. That's my only personal observations. I cannot generalize it but based on my experience. (Interview, 'Maris', LTC PSW, Toronto, 2023).

Similarly, Angela described her Black co-workers as unhelpful and 'hardheaded':

> Angela: Sometimes, some other nationalities they are, I mean to say that they're not helping. Like that kind of work, they're not helping others. So, it's very challenging when you deal with them.
>
> NP: When you encounter those sorts of challenges how do you approach them?
>
> Angela: Just tell them, this is, you need to explain to them. Like we need to work as a team and everything, so yeah. And then if they're not listening to you because most of them are hardheaded, especially the Black people, so, yeah. There's not so much. And then you report to the DOC [Director of Care] or something like that. (Interview, 'Angela', former PSW and current RPN, Toronto, 2023).

Feminist scholar Charmaine Crawford (2018) outlines how the devaluation of care work performed by Black women is linked to longer histories of enslavement and colonialism that exploited Black women's social reproductive labour. While Black women are positioned at the lowest end of 'desirable' care workers within a contemporary racialized hierarchy of workers, they are nonetheless presumed to be suitable for care labour due to stereotypes rooted in colonial ideologies (Crawford, 2018; Glenn, 1992; Duffy, 2007). Positioning Filipina women as superior to non-Filipino PSWs while simultaneously framing Black PSWs as inferior reflects how, in a context of enduring structures of racial subjugation, "reproductive labourers are distinguished from one another by their embodied social characteristics, which are used to construct a hierarchy of eligibility" (McDowell, 2015, p. 2). Danica's earlier discussion of how clients refuse to hire a Black PSW further reveals how these processes of discrimination can have material ramifications for Black workers, who may be passed over in favour of non-Black PSWs. Taken together, the reproduction of racialized tropes about Filipina women and Black women in the PSW labour force indicates how differentiation along the lines of race, ethnicity, and gender map onto the labour market vis-à-vis racialized hierarchies of workers.

6.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored the construction of an appropriate and idealized PSW subjectivity underpinned by racialized and gendered discourses of compassion, deference, and quasi-familial relations and obligations. The insights of PSW educators, Filipina PSWs, and Filipina community workers and organizers highlighted how these traits were understood to be inherent to an individual's personality, contributing to the framing of PSW work as a "vocational calling" that attracts those with a 'natural' disposition for care work. While there seemed to be a consensus about the centrality of embodied emotional labour, this chapter also illuminated how the traits of an ideal PSW were understood to overlap with notions of Filipina identity in ways that positioned Filipina women as the 'ideal' PSW. Importantly, these discourses are linked to longer histories of migrant care labour in Canada, the discourses that underpin training for caregivers in the Philippines, and the gendered discourses of familial intimacy, self-sacrifice, and maternalism that sustain them. I also showed the various ways in which discourses had the effect of positioning certain bodies as more or less "appropriate" for care work through a racialized, gendered, and sexualized perception of self-sacrifice and compassion, thereby constructing a hierarchy of

desirable workers with Filipina women at the top and Black women from African and Caribbean countries at the bottom.

The women's diverse perspectives and experiences elucidate the ambivalent ways in which Filipina PSWs might interpellate an idealized PSW subjectivity defined by an embodied performance of compassion, dynamics of quasi-familial intimacy, and deference. As care workers providing a service, they were aware of the culture of compassion and familial intimacy that regulated their workplace relations and the ways in which this ethos encompassed their clients' and employers' "imaginations of an idealized embodiment of service" (McDowell, et al., 2007, p. 6). While their stories gesture towards a consensus about what constitutes an ideal PSW performance, their critical reflections call attention to the ways in which looking down on PSWs for failing to conform to the idealized embodied performance of a PSW can obscure the structural inequities of PSW labour, shaped by the devaluation of embodied emotional labour and the fundamental incompatibility between "the time space logics of capitalism and those of care" (Lynch, 2012, p. 12; Fraser, 2016; Federici, 2012). Additionally, the diverse ways in which they interacted with these discourses illustrated how interpellation is a malleable and contested process.

Chapter 7 – Conclusion

7.1. Introduction

Building on existing scholarship about the labour market transitions of Filipina caregiver immigrants after completing a caregiver program (Tungohan et al., 2015; Banerjee et al., 2017, 2018; Lightman et al., 2021; Torres et al., 2012) and the interplay of precarious legal status and labour market processes (Goldring and Landolt, 2011; 2013; 2022; Lewis et al., 2015; Bauder, 2006), I have explored the experiences of Filipina caregiver immigrants and their transitions into PSW work. Placing their insights in conversation with PSW educators, community workers and advocates has led to deepened understandings of the interlocking social, familial, and discursive mechanisms that contextualize their occupational transitions after completing a caregiver program, and how these interlocking dynamics could channel them towards the PSW sector. This research also explored the racialized and gendered discourses that underpin dominant constructions of 'idealize' PSW subjectivities and how they might overlap with notions of Filipina identity. While the dominance of these discourses was evident in how they constituted the racial formation of Filipina women (Omi and Winant, 2014), the diverse and ambivalent ways that the Filipina women interacted with them demonstrates how these discourses can be actively renegotiated and resisted. Through this research, my aim was to contribute qualitative nuance to existing scholarship about the labour market outcomes of Filipina live-in caregivers who transition out of the program, deepening understandings of the long-term implications of migrating to Canada with precarious legal status at the intersection of social reproduction and enduring processes of racialization.

Approaching this research from an intersectionality framework was paramount. As discussed in Chapter 2, intersectionality provides a critical analytical framework for understanding the experiences of Filipina migrant women. An intersectionality epistemological framework is particularly pertinent for thinking about the ways in which axes of identity and social difference converge to produce varying experiences of power and privilege in different spatial and temporal contexts. These interlocking power relationships of race, gender, class, sexuality, nation, citizenship, and so on are "forceful social dynamics that intersect and interact" in ways that have material, social, discursive, and spatial implications for how women navigate local labour markets (Lightman and Good Gingrich, 2013, p. 124). As racialized women whose experiences in the Canadian labour market are contoured by their experiences of precarious legal status, an

intersectionality framework offers a critical lens for understanding the multi-scalar and overlapping systems of power *and* privilege that shape Filipina caregiver immigrants' diverse economic livelihoods and labour market transitions.

The social relations, institutions, and discursive ideologies that constitute a pathway towards the PSW sector upon completion of a caregiver program are locally distinctive to the GTA, given the high concentration of caregivers and PSW institutional infrastructure, such as training colleges. Understanding labour markets as socially embedded and politically regulated institutions (Peck, 1996; Massey, 1994; Hanson and Pratt, 2003) makes it possible to situate patterns of labour market segmentation amongst immigrant communities within wider socio-economic changes and as constituted through distinctive local geographies (Peck, 1996; Massey, 1994; Sassen, 2002). To understand the channelling of Filipina caregiver immigrants towards PSW roles in the GTA context, we must consider the historical and geographic contexts of uneven global development and the resulting flows of transnational labour migration (Romero et al., 2014; Browne and Braun, 2008; Eckenwiler, 2012). In addition, we must also understand the labour processes across public and private care settings as they are framed by the regulatory and institutional environment of the GTA, which are underscored by the neoliberal capitalist labour processes that drive the commoditization, privatization and rationalization of care (Armstrong et al., 2019; Ontario Health Coalition, 2020; Daly & Armstrong, 2016).

This contextual background was the focus of Chapter 3, beginning with an overview of the institutionalization of labour export in the Philippines and the associated bureaucratic and discursive practices that racialize Filipina women as 'ideal' workers for social reproductive labour across global labour markets (Rodriguez, 2010; Guevarra, 2010; Tungohan, 2021; Polanco, 2017, 2019). I also discussed the landscape of temporary foreign caregiver programs in Canada, illustrating the reliance on racialized migrant women for social reproductive labour and the long-term ramifications of differential inclusion (Goldring and Landolt, 2013; Walia, 2021) on the economic livelihoods of caregiver immigrants. Following this, I detailed the precarities that characterize PSW labour and how they are linked to the feminization and subsequent devaluation of social reproduction (Lynch, 2022; Federici, Fraser, 2016). By relating these "territorial regulatory spatialities" (Kelly, 2010) in a structural context that undervalues the social reproductive labour of racialized migrant women, the goal of Chapter 3 was to elucidate the wider context in which Filipina caregiver immigrants in the GTA are channeled into caregiving occupations more broadly, and PSW roles, specifically.

While a structural analyses of uneven development reveals the power dynamics that racialize and feminize care labour markets, feminist perspectives on labour markets underscore how the economic livelihoods of women are enmeshed in gendered social relations—the everyday practices, norms, and power dynamics that naturalize care work as "women's work" and tied to social reproduction (Mitchell et al., 2004; Meehan & Strauss, 2015). These frameworks foreground the agency that women engage in to contest their structurally constrained circumstances and support themselves, their families, and their communities (McDowell, 2008, 2009; Schwiter et al., 2018), while also calling attention to processes of differentiation that shape their experiences (Oberhauser et al., 2018). In the context of my research, this approach elucidates how Filipina caregiver immigrants' labour market experiences are constrained by an entanglement of macro-level, multi-scalar structural mechanisms but are nevertheless mediated by their individual agency to make the decisions that would best meet their individual needs and social reproductive responsibilities (Parreñas, 2011; Schwiter et al., 2018).

To better understand how patterns of labour market segmentation among Filipina women are constituted, then, attention must be paid to the ways in which their social relations of 'homeplace' are reorganized across local and transnational contexts throughout the labour migration process and over the course of their settlement experiences in Canada (Parreñas, 2003; Kofman and Raghuram, 2015; Kelly, 2010). I contributed to these dialogues by elucidating the concrete ways in which Filipina caregiver immigrants' labour market experiences are contoured by these reconfigurations under the auspices of Canada's caregiver programs and the conditionality of their status, including protracted periods of transnational family separation and the mandate to live-in with their employer, and restrictions on the educational and occupational opportunities they may avail. In the remainder of this chapter, I will outline these contributions in more detail before concluding with a discussion on limitations, areas for future research, and calls to action.

7.2. Empirical and theoretical connections

I engaged with feminist economic geography scholarship in my empirical work to elucidate the complex ways in which processes of labour market segmentation and regulation are embedded in Filipina PSWs' relations of social reproduction as they intersect with precarious legal status. This formed the focus of Chapter 4, where I explored the personal and family circumstances of Filipina caregiver immigrants at the point of transitioning into an open work permit, and how their experiences of precarious legal status as migrant caregivers informed their labour market

decisions. The women I interviewed discussed their job searches in relation to what would best enable them to meet their social reproductive obligations to their families in the Philippines and their own personal survival, all while preparing for family reunification and settlement in Canada. In the context of their social relations to 'homeplace' and the institutional, financial, and temporal barriers to accessing re-training and/or educational pathways to exit caregiving, remaining in care work appeared to be the most viable and practical choice. The social relations between live-in caregivers and their employers, characterized by ideologies of quasi-familial intimacy, were an additional dimension that incentivized caregivers to remain in care work *especially* if there were material benefits to doing so. Taken together, the Filipina PSWs I interviewed framed their choice to remain in care work as a strategic one. This was not for lack of ambition, talent, or skill, but as a result of their structural exclusion yet unwavering desire to do whatever it took to improve their social and material circumstances. The empirical themes that emerged from this research resonate with existing scholarship about Filipina caregiver immigrants' experiences in the open labour market after completing a caregiver program (Tungohan et al., 2015; Banerjee et al., 2017, 2018; Lightman et al., 2021; Torres et al., 2012; Kelly et al., 2012) and contributes additional nuance elucidating the intersections of precarious legal status, precarious work, and the social and economic devaluation of caring labour (Goldring and Landolt, 2011, 2013; Meehan and Strauss, 2015).

Existing labour migration scholarship has identified personal networks of association as important conduits of information that might contribute to patterns of labour market segmentation amongst immigrant groups (Waldinger and Lichter, 2003; Novek, 2013). As feminist economic geographers have argued, these networks are constituted in place within the everyday lifeworlds of workers in ways that construct the "boundaries of what is imagined to be possible" within a local "social milieu" (Hanson and Pratt, 2003, p. 185). The empirical focus of Chapter 5 explored what I termed *kababayan* networks – referring to Filipina caregiver immigrants' co-ethnic social relations – to elucidate how these ties might mediate their channeling into PSW roles. While these networks functioned as sources of empowerment, support, and inspiration to go back to school or re-enter the labour market, they were also sources of tension as the women were sometimes met with warnings or dismissiveness from fellow *kababayan* when branching out into new opportunities. The empirical work in this chapter reflected a common story within existing research, wherein the networks of Filipina caregiver immigrants were often limited to those who also migrated to Canada as caregiver immigrants (Tungohan et al., 2015; Banerjee et al., 2018). My research contributes

qualitative nuance by highlighting the diverse ways in which caregivers' *kababayan* networks mediate access into the PSW labour market as a distinctive occupational niche. However, the women's transitions into PSW work were not simply a matter of following advice from their fellow *kababayan*; rather, they actively weighed their decisions alongside assessments of other economic livelihoods, and whether it could adequately enable them to meet their social reproduction responsibilities.

In the second half of Chapter 5, I explored how the PSW education and certification landscape is embedded in *kababayan* networks through Filipino-owned private career colleges, word-of-mouth recruitment, and referral discounts. The women I interviewed discussed PSW certification programs – especially when pursued at a PCC – as a cheaper, faster, and more flexible program, which made the possibility of obtaining some form of Canadian education more attainable. They also perceived the PSW labour market as a more lucrative option compared to the other roles they were considering. Although the PSW sector remained within the realm of devalued caregiving labour, transitioning into this line of work opened new avenues for the women to diversify their economic livelihoods, representing a strategy for improving their family's material circumstances within the context of their differential inclusion into the Canadian labour market.

The fact that many of the women I interviewed attended Filipino-owned PSW PCCs may suggest the PSW education industry *itself* is seen by class-privileged Filipino immigrants as a pathway towards upward class mobility. These schools seemed to be owned and operated by doctors and nurses who migrated to Canada. While additional engagement with Filipino owners of PCCs is needed to understand this phenomenon, the prominence of Filipino-owned and operated PCCs can potentially reveal more insight into stratified class and citizenship relations amongst *kababayan* in the GTA (cf. Browne et al., 2006; cf. Nazareno et al., 2022).

Feminist economic geographers have called attention to the embodied and intersecting characteristics of workers and how they might be implicated in processes of social differentiation and inequalities in the labour market (McDowell, 2009, 2015). As McDowell (2015) notes, the stereotypical assumptions that underpin the embodied corporeal traits of workers "map onto the labour market" in ways that constitute a hierarchy of workers, jobs, and notions about what is considered 'un/desirable' or 'in/appropriate' (p. 18). By examining the interconnected processes of identity and subject formation, social reproduction, and the macro-level structures that regulate labour markets, we can better understand how local and global economic dynamics evolve. This is especially pertinent for PSW labour, which is characterized by dimensions of embodied emotional

labour and body work (Dyer et al., 2008; Twigg et al., 2011; Erikson and Grove, 2008). These dimensions are further shaped by the discursive geographies of racialized and gendered care work which become inscribed on workers' bodies (Huang et al., 2012; Pratt, 1998).

Building on these arguments, the empirical work of Chapter 6 explored the discursive construction of an 'idealized' PSW subjectivity and how these discourses converged with notions and embodied performances of Filipina identity. Through the concepts of *embodiment* (Moss, 2005) and *interpellation* (McDowell et al., 2007; Batnizky and McDowell, 2011), I sought to understand whether and how these discourses were implicated in the channelling of Filipina caregiver immigrants towards PSW roles. By using embodiment as a conceptual tool, my analysis attended to the ways in which gendered and racialized identities of Filipina caregiver immigrants – and the specific ways they are constructed within the Canadian context – are inextricably intertwined with their experiences in the labour market (Banerjee et al., 2018, p. 911; McDowell, 2008, 2009, 2015; Stiell and England, 1997; England and Stiell, 1997). In a similar vein, *interpellation* helped elucidate the complex ways in which Filipina caregiver immigrants negotiated the stereotypical assumptions about their subjectivities as Filipina women *and* as Filipina PSWs.

There was a strong consensus around the idea that a 'natural' compassionate disposition was what defined an 'idealized' PSW subjectivity, and Filipina women were seen as the embodiment of this PSW ideal. The insights from PSW educators and the Filipina PSWs themselves demonstrated how the construction of an ideal PSW is racialized, as performances of 'gentle' and 'familial' care were attributed to Filipina PSWs whereas performances of 'aggression' and 'impatience' were at times attributed to Black PSWs. Some of the women I interviewed pushed back on these workplace subjectivities in different ways, problematizing how clients and employers would leverage racialized stereotypes about Filipina women to justify poor treatment or difficult working conditions. Taken together, the empirical work in this chapter illustrated how care workers are distinguished from one another through their intersecting, embodied characteristics, which employers and consumers/clients draw upon to "construct a hierarchy of eligibility" *and* desirability (McDowell, 2015, p. 2). While I remain cautious about concluding whether interpellation is a significant mechanism that impels Filipina caregiver immigrants towards PSW roles, I found Linda McDowell's feminist approach to be useful for understanding how workers engage with, resist, and negotiate their workplace subjectivities (McDowell et al., 2007; Batnizky and McDowell, 2011).

7.3. Limitations and areas for future research

A key limitation in this research relates to the minimal engagement with PSW educators, particularly at the private career college level, which act as clinical placement and training entities. The women's stories and experiences suggest private career colleges may be notable institutions in which *kababayan* networks are embedded and might therefore play a significant role in regulating the PSW labour market. Interestingly too, the women's stories suggest how the PSW education and training sector *itself* is sometimes utilized as a pathway towards upward economic mobility amongst Filipino immigrants with class privilege and access to resources, evident in the examples of Filipino healthcare professionals opening private career colleges in the GTA catered to newer immigrants. This point warrants further inquiry to better understand the class divisions within the Filipino diasporic community and the ways in which they may relate to migration period and/or pathway (Browne et al., 2006; Nazareno et al., 2022).

A second limitation of this research is the absence of engagement with PSW employers, including staffing agencies and LTC facilities, which would have shed additional insight into how the embeddedness of the PSW labour market in *kababayan* networks operates. Interviewing PSW employers could have illuminated the social and employment practices of the PSW sector – such as recruiting, hiring, training, performance evaluations, and so on – and how these practices might be implicated in processes of immigrant labour market segmentation. Their perspectives could have revealed more detail about the mechanisms through which idealized and racialized PSW subjectivities are constructed within and across different workplace environments, adding more nuance to my discussion of interpellation. As Batnizky and McDowell (2011) argue, interpellation is a *triple* process through which workers contend with the expectations and assumptions of consumers, coworkers, *and* employers/managers. Engagement with PSW employers presents an area for further empirical and theoretical inquiry for better understanding interpellation at work in this sector.

Although this research focused on the occupational transitions of Filipina women into PSW roles in the context of their migration to Canada as caregivers, existing scholarship has also highlighted the overrepresentation of Afro-Caribbean women in these roles too. As Turcotte and Savage (2020) pointed out, Filipina women *and* Black women each comprised 30% of the immigrant PSW labour force. Historically, women from African and Caribbean countries were the predominant group of migrant caregivers prior to the dominance of Filipina women in the Live-in Caregiver Program (Arat-Koç, 1997; Daenzer, 1997; Thobani, 2000). My research findings also

demonstrated that their experiences in the PSW labour market differs significantly given their racialized subjectivities as Black women and the wider context of anti-Black racism in Canada. Future research could similarly explore the caregiver migration trajectories of Black women and their occupational transitions into PSW roles, illuminating how their experiences are shaped by the interplay of racialized and gendered hierarchies within the broader political economy of care work.

7.4. Calls to action

7.4.1. Reforms to the caregiver program

This research echoes longstanding calls from migrant caregivers, migrant workers' rights organizations, and scholars for policy reforms to the system of precarious legal status that underpin Canada's various caregiver programs (Bagon et al., 2024). Substantial changes to the caregiver pilot programs have been announced since I began writing this thesis. In June 2024, Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) announced changes to the caregiver program pilots to provide home care workers with PR status on arrival, which migrant caregiver organizations and activists have been calling for since the late 1970s. Along with PR on arrival, the IRCC also lowered the educational and language requirements from Canadian equivalency of 1-year post-secondary education to high-school equivalency, and from Level 5 Canadian Language Benchmarks to a Level 4. Additional changes expanded eligibility to include employment with home care organizations providing temporary or part-time care for semi-independent individuals or those recovering from injury or illness (Bagon et al., 2024).

In late January 2025, the federal government quietly updated the Immigration Canada website indicating that the Home Care Worker Immigration Pilots will open on March 31st, 2025. No details about eligibility, application procedures, or potential caps on applicants have been announced, generating much uncertainty and anxiety amongst care workers. In addition to this lack of information, many migrant caregiver organizations have argued that the current reforms systematically exclude caregivers already in Canada from previous caregiver programs who were unable to secure PR status due to stringent annual application caps and/or delays related to changing employers (Migrant Rights Network, 2025; Bagon et al.,2024). Between Jan. 1st, 2019, and Jan. 31st, 2023, the caregiver pilot programs received a combined total of 31,443 PR applications, which added to the existing "inventory" of backlogged PR applications under past programs, including the LCP (Shaw et al., 2024). However, no mechanisms were introduced to reduce this backlog, leaving many migrant caregivers' citizenship status – and plans for settlement and family

reunification in Canada – in continued limbo (Migrants Rights Network, 2024; Shaw et al., 2024; Bagon et al., 2024).

The upcoming implementation of the revised Home Child Care Provider and Home Support Worker pilot programs presents a critical opportunity to address systemic exclusions by prioritizing the creation of accessible and inclusive pathways to PR for *all* caregivers currently in Canada, regardless of the program under which they initially arrived (Bagon et al., 2024). Extending PR eligibility would help to redress the systemic vulnerabilities tied to the *conditionality* (Goldring and Landolt, 2011) of precarious legal status as live-in caregivers, including family separation, deskilling and occupational immobility, and the disproportionate levels of power granted to employers. Gaining PR would enable care workers to navigate jobs and employers with more freedom, allowing them to move out of unsafe or abusive employment relationships without fear of being deported. PR would also open the educational and training programs that migrant caregivers can enroll in while completing the program, minimizing the limbo period of upgrading any professional or occupational credentials from the Philippines and immediately opening their labour market options upon completion of the program. This would also enable them to acquire new skills or certifications to support their transitions into the Canadian labour market.

To summarize, expanding PR eligibilities in future caregiver programs would empower *all* migrant care workers, regardless of their prior credentials or educational levels, to navigate the labour market more freely and securely, challenging the structural mechanisms that channel Filipina caregiver immigrants into PSW roles. Doing so would also help to disrupt the ongoing relationship between precarious legal status and precarious work experiences in the labour market amongst Filipina caregiver immigrants. This could enable them to pursue a wider range of employment opportunities or educational pathways under better conditions and empower them to follow their non-caregiving aspirations. This is not to suggest that the overrepresentation of Filipina caregiver immigrants in the PSW labour market is inherently problematic or negative; indeed, the caring labour PSWs engage in is vital, skilled labour that warrants social recognition and equitable financial remuneration. Rather, these points are to problematize how the socio-legal production of precarious legal status constrains caregiver immigrants' mobilities in the labour market in ways that may impel them to reorganize their goals and reconfigure their economic livelihoods.

7.4.2. Addressing the structural inequities of PSW labour

As feminist political economy frameworks have emphasized, the systemic devaluation of social reproduction and caring labour is constitutive of the inequalities that women experience in

the labour market and beyond (Meehan and Strauss, 2015; Mitchell et al., 2004; Kofman and Raghuram, 2015). As such, transformative citizenship and immigration policy reforms must be coupled with systematic, long-term, and sustainable institutional reforms to disrupt the systemic devaluation of PSW work and the PSW workforce itself. Ethel Tungohan (2020) underscored the need to "assess how labour *and* immigration policies combine to create greater precariousness for Filipino migrant healthcare workers". For instance, while the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic drew widespread public attention to the contributions of PSWs to Ontario's healthcare system, the pandemic exacerbated existing structural inequities with detrimental impacts on well-being of PSWs and those in their care (Ontario Health Coalition, 2020; Matatag, 2021). Discourses valorizing PSWs alongside other health care workers as "heroes" were common in popular media, and were coupled with provincial policy reforms like pandemic pay – temporary wage increases – and symbolic gestures such as public applauses to improve morale and retention amongst PSWs. While well-intentioned, the superficial nature of these measures failed to address the underlying causes of precarity experienced by PSWs, such as chronic understaffing, a lack of full-time contracts, poverty wages, increasing acuity of care, inadequate benefits and workplace protections (Ontario Health Coalition, 2020; Armstrong et al., 2009; Syed, 2019).

The multiple dimensions of job insecurity in PSW work affect both their material realities and personal well-being. For instance, Pinto et al.'s (2022) study about the experiences of PSWs in the GTA illustrates a relationship between their precarious working conditions and poor health outcomes. Armstrong et al. (2020) emphasize a critical truth: not only do the conditions of work impact the health and well-being of PSWs, but they inherently shape the conditions of care. Implementing reforms that prioritize the well-being of PSWs will not only improve the workplace realities of care workers but also ensure that care recipients receive dignified care that meets their diverse needs. As Syed's (2019) and Owusu's (2023) dissertations demonstrate, addressing the structural inequities of the PSW labour market and the provision of long-term care is a racial justice issue given the concentration of racialized immigrants who comprise these workforces. While the specific workplace setting (e.g. home and community care versus institutional care) might necessitate sector-specific policy changes, sector-wide reforms can be implemented in ways that serve the interests of unionized and non-unionized workers. This can include permanent and publicly funded living wage increases, widespread access to health and wellness supports, and a robust strategy at the level of the provincial government that enforces the rights of PSWs across all workplace environments.

Improving the regulation of PSW certification is an actionable item that can help to protect the rights of workers and those in their care. Currently, the only regulatory framework overseeing the complex PSW education landscape is the Personal Support Worker Standards set by the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities. While these standards provide a framework for curriculum content, their interpretation and implementation vary widely across training programs, resulting in inconsistencies in the skills and knowledge of graduates entering the workforce. While Kelly and Bourgeault (2015) argue that a PSW standard of education can potentially redress the issue of regulation within the sector, more needs to be done to improve the oversight of the institutions themselves, particularly at the private career college level. Whereas the educational performance of community colleges is evaluated by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, private career colleges are regulated by consumer protection agencies that are more concerned with their bottom line (Gonzalez, 2024). It would be unfair to generalize private career colleges as predatorial, yet recent news about the poor quality of education, lack of experienced instructors, and high costs of tuition point to the vulnerabilities of newcomers. These institutions often attract students with the promises of flexible education, lower admissions criteria, and diverse learning options, leaving many at risk of being exploited (Gonzalez, 2024; Edwardson, 2022). Improving the oversight of PSW training institutions can protect workers and potential students from being exploited.

At the level of the labour market, Marani et al. (2021) argue that the re-organization of personal support work towards 'semi-professionalization' can help to disrupt the categorization of this work as 'non-skilled' and low status amongst other health professions. They identify six key attributes that could realize this shift, including: 1) a minimum standard of education; 2) an applied and contextual knowledge base; 3) a standardized set of performed activities to support the functioning of bureaucratic organizational structures; 4) some degree of self- or government regulated ethical standards/standards of practice and 5) clarification of roles that define a PSWs' monopoly of specific work; and 6) the autonomy of the decision-making at the discretion of a supervisory health professional. The recent establishment of the Health and Supportive Care Providers Oversight Authority (HSCPOA), a voluntary registry with established codes of conduct, education requirements, and due process for complaints, represents a unique pathway to elevating the conditions of personal support work (Rutherford, 2024). While the efficacy of the HSCPOA remains to be seen, unions representing PSWs – including SEIU Healthcare and Unifor – have problematized the HSCPOA as a "registry designed to tax and unfairly adjudicate PSWs" if

claims are brought against them, infringing their rights as already underpaid and overworked workers (SEIU Healthcare, 2024). This emphasizes the need to assess whether policy reforms directly tackle the deeply entrenched root causes of PSW labour market precarity – austerity, racial capitalism, and the devaluation of social reproductive labour (Henaway, 2023; Walia, 2021; Fraser, 2016) and serve the interests of PSW workers.

On a social level, improving the social and material realities of PSWs across all sectors demands a fundamental reimaging of how care work and social reproduction is valued in the labour market and beyond. This involves living wages and improved working conditions for care workers *and* the cultivation of a cultural and political ethos that recognizes care as an antidote to the hostility of a neoliberal capitalist society (Lynch, 2022; Ling, 2025). A transformative approach is needed— one that redefines care work as a collective social responsibility and recognizes social reproductive labour as *real*, skilled work (Federici, 2012; Fraser, 2016; Lynch, 2022). For example, Silvia Federici (2012) calls for the politicization of elder care as an issue of social justice and "the construction of collective forms of reproduction" that cares for elderly populations and *not* at the expense of their carers (p. 236). Indeed, improving and protecting the rights of PSWs is a social justice issue that is tied to the collective responsibility to care for society's most vulnerable populations (Eckenwiler, 2012; Federici, 2012; Armstrong et al. 2009; Ling, 2025).

Taken together, addressing the structural inequities and social devaluation of PSW labour is a race-based and gender-based issue given the overrepresentation of racialized immigrant women in this line of work, including Filipina migrant women (Turcottes and Savage, 2020; Pinto et al., 2022; Laporte et al., 2020; Syed, 2019; Owusu, 2023). Despite the important contributions of this workforce, their experiences, struggles, and desires have historically been rendered invisible in public and popular discourse (Syed and Ahmad, 2021). As the empirical work in this thesis has highlighted, these inequities are compounded by intersecting systems of oppression, including precarious legal status, racial discrimination, and gendered expectations of caregiving as "natural" or "innate" to their identity. It is crucial that policy recommendations employ a critical, intersectional approach to advance social and material equity amongst the PSW workforce.

7.5. Concluding thoughts

The empirical findings of my research underscore the importance of cultivating relationships of care and solidarity to uplift the experiences of Filipina care workers. The Filipina PSWs I interviewed gestured towards these relationships when discussing their workplace

relationships with their fellow Filipina co-workers; as Maris said, "We have that trust for each other. It's because we have that kind of culture; you trust each other right. You are *kabayan*. You will not betray your *kabayan*". Ethel Tungohan's (2023) comprehensive work on migrant caregiver activism highlights the transformative power of migrant care workers' relationships with each other, as they are embedded in an "embodied knowledge of oppressive structures and institutions" that can be harnessed collectively to "disrupt the status quo" (p. 19). Cultivating affective care networks around shared experiences of labour migration, care work, and family can become sites of resistance against the dehumanizing effects of global economic structures and labor migration policies, *and* I add, the workplace structures that depersonalize and devalue their caring labour as PSWs.

There was a general sense amongst the Filipina PSWs I interviewed that they did not necessarily want to cause trouble for themselves and their co-workers by problematizing their working conditions with their managers and employers. Some of the women who raised their concerns to their employers felt that the 'solutions' the employers provided did not lead to any tangible or structural improvements to their daily working lives. In the absence of meaningful institutional support, these embodied and relational acts of care can serve as a way for care workers to reclaim their agency on the job. By fostering affective networks of mutual support, not only can they navigate the immediate challenges of their work environments by supporting one another but also resist the broader structural conditions that perpetuate the cultural and political devaluation of PSW labor. "Validating the affective dimensions of each other's experiences", Tungohan (2023) argues, is just as integral to care activism as the 'loud' political acts of organized protesting and lobbying for structural changes (p. 196).

I conclude this thesis by emphasizing the need for solidarity amongst workers to extend across social differences. While Filipina PSWs are overrepresented within the PSW labour force, so too are women of other intersectionalities – namely, Black women from Caribbean and African countries. My empirical work demonstrates how racial discrimination in the form of harmful stereotypes not only harms workers socially and materially, but also pits workers of different intersectionalities against one another. In an age of increasingly militarized borders, structurally embedded racism, and dynamics of xenophobia against immigrant workers, Ethel Tungohan's insights about the transformative power of affective care networks offers an important framework for cultivating solidarity amongst not just PSWs, but *all* care workers – unified under common goals related to improved working *and* caring conditions. This is not to say that these relationships do not

already exist, but rather, to underscore the transformative power of mobilizing affective relationships for social change. Such solidarity, rooted in mutual recognition and care, is not only a means of survival but also a powerful act of resistance against the systemic devaluation of care labor and the oppressive power structures that perpetuate inequalities amongst racialized migrant women.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview guides

Filipina PSWs/former caregivers

Background and Immigration

- Can you tell me your age and how long you've been in Canada for?
- Where in the Philippines are you and your family from?
- Before becoming an overseas caregiver, what is your education background, and what did you do for work in the Philippines?
    a. Did you work as a caregiver elsewhere before coming to Canada?
- Tell me about your preparations to leave the Philippines.
    a. How did you hear about Canada's Caregiver program?
    b. How old were you when you applied to a caregiver program? When were you accepted, and when did you migrate to Canada?
    c. What were your family's thoughts about your decision to immigrate?
    d. Why did you apply through a caregiver program and not another immigration stream?
    e. What resources (financial, social, etc) did you have access to when preparing to migrate?
    f. Did you have a spouse or children that you were separated from?
- Tell me about your process of applying for permanent resident status. How easy or difficult was it to get permanent resident status?
    a. Did you apply right away?
    b. How long did it take to process your application?
    c. How much did it cost?
    d. How long were you separated from your spouse and/or children?
    e. What supports and services did you access while waiting for your application to be processed?
    f. Who did you sponsor to come to Canada after getting PR?
- What were your aspirations when coming to Canada?

Transitions

- Tell me about your job search process after completing the caregiver program.
    - How is looking for a job here in Canada different from in the Philippines?
    - What job options did you consider applying to after completing the caregiver program, and why?
        - What characteristics were you looking for in a job?
        - How did you assess whether to pursue a job in a specific sector?
        - How did your friends/family influence your job search? (e.g. network hiring, job suggestions)
        - Were there any job sectors that you wanted to pursue, but didn't? If so, why?
    - Who did you talk to about searching for jobs (e.g. friends, former employers)?
    - How easy or difficult was it to get an interview for a job you wanted to pursue?
- How did your family support you while you looked for a new job after the caregiver program?

- What kind of resources, supports, or services did you use when transitioning out of the caregiver program?
    - Did you go to any employment and/or job training resources during your search? (e.g. resume and CV workshops, job interview prep, employment counsellor). If yes, how did you get access to these supports? (e.g. government services, community organizations?)
    - Did you use any online community resources?
    - Did you have your credentials or education from the Philippines "upgraded"? Why or why not?

PSW journey

- Did you try other jobs after the caregiver program before you became a PSW?
    - What jobs did you like? What did you dislike?
- Tell me about tell me about how you became a PSW.
    - How did you learn about PSW work?
    - How long after completing the caregiver program did you become a PSW?
    - What kind of job readiness/training/education did you complete to prepare for this role?
    - Do you have friends or family members who are/were PSWs?
    - How did your family in the Philippines and in Canada react to you becoming a PSW?
- Did you attend a PSW training program? If so, what was your experience like? What were the most important takeaways/lessons? What was the instructor like?
    - How did you choose which training program to take?
    - Did you do it with friends/people you knew?
- Have you considered changing out of the PSW industry? Why, or why not?
    - Tell me about your transition out of PSW work. How did that happen, and what did you do?

On-the-job experiences

- How did you find the job at the facility you currently work at?
    - What was the hiring process like?
- What qualities and skills do you think are most important for the work that you do?
- What challenges do you face in doing this work?
    - What strategies do you have to cope with these challenges, and how have you developed these strategies (social learning)?
- Is there anything you'd like to change about your job?
    - What do you dislike about your job?
    - What changes would you like to see in the PSW industry?
- Tell me about your co-workers.
    - Do you have a lot of Filipina co-workers? What is your relationship like to them?
- Tell me about your residents.
    - Are there any residents that you have good relationships with? Any residents with bad relationships?
    - What do you think your residents like the most about you? What do you think they dislike?
- Tell me about management.
    - How is your relationship to management?

- What are their expectations of PSWs?

Sense of self and understandings of "Filipina-ness"

- How do you feel about being a PSW?
    a. What do you like about this job? What are the benefits?
    b. How did you feel about this work when you first started? How have these feelings changed over time, and why? How do you feel about it now?
- What does being Filipina mean to you? How does it feel to be a Filipina woman in your line of work?
- What are you most proud of when it comes to your work, and why?
- Do you get satisfaction from your work?
- How do other groups in your place(s) of work approach their job?
    a. How does it compare with what you see as being Filipina in this work?
- How would you compare your experiences in the caregiver program to your current experiences as a PSW?

Interview Guide for PSW Training Institution Staff

Background

- Tell me a bit about the PSW program at [institution] and what your role is.
- What makes your programs attractive to prospective applicants and/or future employers?
- (Not for CC) What are your recruitment and marketing strategies?
    - Where do you post advertisements? How do you use social media?
    - Do you find it useful to target specific communities, neighbourhoods, or community organizations?
    - Do you have program ambassadors?
    - Do you connect with employment and immigrant settlement programs?
- What are your enrollment process like?
- What are the differences between community colleges and private career colleges?

PSW Training/Education Materials

- Tell me about your PSW training curricula.
    - How is your program structured?
    - What topics are covered?
    - What kind of assignments must students complete?
- Do you provide hands-on training opportunities?
- Do you partner with LTC facilities to host placement students? Tell me about these partnerships.
    - What strategies, if any, do you use to place students at LTC facilities?
- What distinguishes a "good" PSW from a "bad" PSW, and how do you teach this to students?
    - Have you had any situations where a student's performance in theory/in class doesn't align with their placement performance?
- From your perspective, what are the most important skills (read: traits) that PSWs must have, and how do you teach these things to students?
- Do you collect program completion rates, or placement student rates?

PSW student demographics

- How many students do you take in per year
    - Can you speak to the age range and the ethno-racial demographics of your program's population?
- Ratio of international to domestic students
    - Why do you think your program attracts many international students? How many eventually become a PSW?
- Age range of students
- In your experience, who does your PSW program attract? Why do you think that is?
    - Social media strategy? Recruitment strategies? Partnerships?
- How does your PSW program manage and/or incorporate diversity?
- What do you think are the implications of an elderly workforce caring for elderly people?

Caregiver to PSW pathway

- Can you speak to the proportion of Filipina students enrolled in your PSW program?
    a. How did this pattern develop? (Are they trying to attract Filipinas or former caregivers or both?)
    b. How do your Filipina students perform in-class, and in their placements?

- Why do you think Filipina immigrants are attracted to your PSW program? Has your institution taken steps to attract them?
- Why do you think there is a high share of Filipina women working PSW jobs?

Interview Guide for Community Workers and/or Advocates

Background

- If organization: tell me a bit about <organization name> and what your role is.
    a. How long have you been doing this work?
    b. What kind of resources and supports do you offer to caregivers transitioning out of a caregiver program?
    c. How do you advertise your services to the caregiver community? (Social media? Ethnic networks?)
- If community informant: tell me about the work that you do and how you got involved.
    a. How long have you been doing this work?
    b. What kind of advocacy and/or organizing work do you participate in?

Work with caregivers

- What kind of work do you do with caregivers specifically? How often?
- At what stage in their transition out of the caregiver program do caregivers come to the organization for support? (e.g. before completing the program, shortly after completing the program, years after completing the program, etc).
    a. What are some common or reoccurring challenges related to transitioning out of the caregiver program that come up when caregivers seek support?
    b. In your experience, how do caregivers respond to these challenges?
    c. Has this changed over time, particularly with changes to the program?
- What are some of the aspirations and needs voiced by caregivers that come to Canada?
- What has been the impact of the new caregiver pilot programs/streams on caregivers' job searches after they complete the program?
    a. How has the pilot program impacted the kind of challenges that caregivers face when looking for a new job?
- What challenges do you encounter when trying to help caregivers?

Labour market transitions

- In your work with caregivers, do you help them find a job?
- What challenges do caregivers voice when it comes to searching for a new job upon receiving an open work permit?
- In your experience, what job sectors/ industries do caregivers express interest in?
- In your experience working with caregivers, what are the key priorities for caregivers when they search for a job?

Caregiver to PSW pathway

- In your experience working with caregivers, what seem to be the most important factors that influence a caregivers' job options?
    a. What are some of the important factors that caregivers consider when making job market decisions?
- Why do you think there are many Filipina women in PSW jobs?
    a. Do you think there is a relationship between the caregiver program and the high number of Filipina women in PSW jobs?
    b. Does your organization work with any agencies?